Homo Abyssus

THE DRAMA OF THE QUESTION OF BEING

FERDINAND ULRICH

Translated by D. C. Schindler

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ferdinand Ulrich left the great majority of passages quoted from Aquinas in Latin, and often cited other texts in footnotes in their original language. All texts from Aquinas have been translated into English the first time they appear, while the Latin has been retained when Ulrich repeats phrases or small excerpts from the passages quoted. English translations of the Thomistic corpus have been taken, with occasional slight modifications, from extant English editions where available (these are indicated in the bibliography). All other translations of Aquinas, and other foreign language texts, when not otherwise attributed, are by me.

I wish to express my gratitude to the following people for the help they offered over the course of this project: Bishop Stefan Oster, Martin Bieler, Marine de la Tour, Adrian Walker, and Reinhard Hütter. A colleague and several students at the John Paul II Institute also helped puzzle through some passages in the context of a reading group: Nicholas J. Healy, Erik van Versendaal, and Rachel Coleman. Michael Camacho helped with some of the Latin. I would also like to thank Fr. Antonio López, Dean of the John Paul II Institute, for overseeing the project, and Ashleigh McKown for her expert copyediting. Finally, deep gratitude above all to Prof. Ferdinand Ulrich himself, who illuminated some of the more mysterious dimensions of his thought in conversation.

Introduction

MARTIN BIELER

Habent sua fata libelli.[1] This general truth holds particularly for the present work by Ferdinand Ulrich, which after many years is still waiting to receive the attention it deserves. Its future lies yet before it. Though a reviewer greeted *Homo Abyssus* (HA) when it first appeared in 1961 with the observation that it "may very well announce a renewal of philosophical inquiry and work,"[2] the book's direct literary resonance turned out on the whole to be fairly meager.[3] As a representative example of this neglect, we might consider the fact that a new work on the problem of the transcendentals in Thomas Aquinas sums up Ulrich's book in passing with a single sentence: "F. Ulrich uses the text [Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*] for a 'speculative development' in *Homo Abyssus*."[4] Reinhard Feiter, who has traced the influence of Ulrich's work, correctly formulates his findings by saying that Ulrich's publications have found very little echo in the broader arena.[5] He immediately cites the fundamental difficulty that faces anyone who confronts Ulrich's writing, a difficulty that certainly explains at least in part the lack of resonance: "His texts are laden with phenomenologies and at the same time remain 'speculative' in the most profound sense. This thinking is in dialogue with a variety of authors, but the process of the conversation remains more or less hidden. Though there are certainly many sources feeding Ulrich's work and his writing is not at all self-referential, the reader nevertheless feels confronted by what appears to be a hermetically sealed form of thought and discourse."[6] Many readers stand before the mountain in confusion and ask themselves how they are supposed to climb it. The mountain's faces appear so steep that any attempt to gain some foothold would seem hopeless from the start. The frustration that sets in all too quickly often enough prevents anyone from engaging any further with the work.

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[1] ["Books have their own fate." The full verse, from Terentianus Maurus, *De litteris, De syllabis, De matris*, reads *Pro captu lectoris, habent sua fata libelli*, which may be rendered "The fate of books depends on the capacity of their readers." –Trans.]

[2] Claude Bruaire, review of *Homo Abyssus*, by Ferdinand Ulrich, *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 19 (1965): 171.

[3] In the massive, three-volume work *Christliche Philosophie im katholischen Denken des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, Ulrich is mentioned briefly only once, in volume 3, *Moderne Strömungen im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Emerich Coreth, Walter M. Neidl, and Georg Pfligersdorffer (Graz: Styria, 1990), 302.

[4] Jan Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 75n8.

[5] Reinhard Feiter, *Zur Freiheit befreit: Apologie des Christlichen bei Ferdinand Ulrich* (Würzburg: Echter, 1994), 23. For a bibliography of Ulrich's publications, see 277–83. Cf. also Martin Bieler, *Freiheit als Gabe: Ein schöpfungstheologischer Entwurf* (Freiburg: Herder, 1991), 261–66.

But Ulrich has nevertheless received a hearing in one place, and indeed a decisive one: already as an editor, Hans Urs von Balthasar took upon himself the risk of publishing Ulrich's important books and cites those books in central places in his own work. When Balthasar dedicated *Spirit and Institution*, the fourth volume of his *Explorations in Theology* (1974), to Ferdinand Ulrich in friendship, he referred not only to the man but also to the thinker. Balthasar's work and Ulrich's work are more closely bound together than the reception of Balthasar has hitherto tended to recognize.[7] It would be worthwhile in fact to study the relationship between the two thinkers more closely—above all in the *Theodrama*, but also already in *Glory of the Lord*, volume 4 (1965), and then later in the *Theologic*. The more one delves into the philosophical implications of Balthasar's works, the more powerfully Ulrich enters into the center of one's field of vision. This is yet another reason why the present new edition of *Homo Abyssus* responds to a pressing need.[8]

Balthasar's great esteem for Ulrich suggests that Ulrich's work has some substance to offer, despite the obstacles its form may present. For me, *Homo Abyssus* numbers among the ten books I would take with me on a desert island. (Indeed, it would be on the top half of the list.) I consider this book to be a classic waiting to be discovered, a book that one can read again and again and learn something new each time. The difficulty it presents to the reader is ultimately no argument for ignoring the content of this astonishing book. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is also not an easy read, but people have been willing to pay the price to work their way through it. (It seems to me that the comparison with Hegel's *Phenomenology* is not an exaggeration.) Anyone who devotes himself to Ferdinand Ulrich's writings, and especially to *Homo Abyssus*, with the requisite energy, will increasingly come to see how much Ulrich's manner of speech is an expression of precise thinking. In fact, style for Ulrich is thought that has been worked out according to its proper contours. This is why we do not need to worry, when we read Ulrich's writing, that we will end up flailing in the current of mere understanding or get buried under the "drifts of swirling flakes of reflection";[9] instead, we are able to find rest, and to realize that Ulrich does not just see the front of the tree as he stands before it, but also sees it from above, from below, from behind, from the sides, and indeed above all from the inside. For all its extreme differentiation, Ulrich's thought proves in the end to be of an elemental simplicity; in this, it is not unlike the *complicatio* (Nicholas of Cusa) of the wealth of creation, as it is gathered up in relation to the One Thing Necessary, which is ultimately intelligible to everyone.

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[6] Feiter, *Zur Freiheit befreit*, 23.

[7] Cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Our Task: A Report and a Plan* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 38.

[8] [Bieler is referring to the new edition, published in 1998 by the Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln, in which his introduction appeared. *Homo Abyssus* was originally published, by the same press, in 1961. –Trans.]

But we cannot draw out the honey, of course, without first patiently putting in the work. In Asia, it is taken for granted that a person must occupy himself for ten years with certain things before he can achieve some degree of understanding. It is a span of time that cannot be artificially cut short without detriment. In a similar way, an entry into Ulrich's concern cannot be had on the cheap. (It seems to me that this is the primary reason his book has not found its proper resonance.) For good reason, in the preface to *Homo Abyssus*, Ulrich points to the fact that the thinking that occurs in this book has grown out of contemplation and therefore "require[s] the reader to retrace this contemplative path himself, retrieving its thoughts as he circles through it." The reader who wishes to understand Ulrich will not be able to avoid coming to terms in a fundamental way with Thomas Aquinas, the thinker to whom Ulrich owes the most. A fundamental reading of Balthasar's writings likewise proves to be beneficial. But anyone who heads off for the adventure of discovering Ulrich's thought thus equipped may count on tapping into a vein of gold.

But where does one begin the search? It is extremely difficult to find some access to Ulrich's writings "from the outside," since his work proceeds by unfolding everything, again and again, from the founding center of his thought. (It is precisely this that conveys the impression of hermeticism.) This founding center found its definitive original form in *Homo Abyssus*. In this book, the early sketches come to fruition and his later thought has its constant reference point, which it continues to intensify and deepen. Once one has thoroughly studied *Homo Abyssus*, the writings that follow open up with greater clarity and, conversely, the later writings cast a light on Ulrich's main work. It therefore makes sense to consider the texts that preceded *Homo Abyssus*, in order to acquire a point of entry into his main work, through the question of its genesis. Finally, we will cast a glance at Ulrich's later works, in hopes that the core of Ulrich's principal concern will thus shine forth all the more clearly.

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[9] Cf. Søren Kierkegaard, *Tagebücher*, vol. 3, ed. Hayo Gerdes (Duesseldorf: Diederichs Verlag, 1968), 42.

The Texts Prior to *Homo Abyssus*

In 1954, Ulrich composed a larger work that bore the title *Being and Essence: A Speculative Unfolding of an Anthropological Ontology*.[10] In this powerful text of nearly 240 pages, which was privately published, Ulrich addressed numerous themes that occupied him in *Homo Abyssus* and later writings. Considered as an exposition of a problem, this first book is remarkably consistent in itself and contains already decisive fundamental insights. The first lines of the foreword (which were dated February 20, 1955) indicate the aim of the text: "Philosophy finds itself in a moment of decision. It is being called, in its innermost conscience, to discern the spirits in order to make the proper decision. It is called to carry out a self-critique. The principal aim of this work is to determine the speculative foundation of this self-critique, within the horizon of an ontological self-understanding of man on the basis of a fundamental elucidation of the principles of reality, ideality, and bonicity." Thus, right from the start, we find the theme of "crisis," as decision and discernment, which runs through the whole of Ulrich's work as a guiding thread. By unfolding the triad of principles he lists here, Ulrich is establishing a connection with Gustav Siewerth's vision of creation as "being's movement of finitization" (5, 13, 151*ff.*, 223*ff.*), and picks up the notion that ideality and reality need to be interpreted as particular phases of this movement of finitization.[11] Both Siewerth and Ulrich understand the phrase "being's movement of finitization" as an expression of creation as the communication of being: *Creare autem est dare esse.*[12] At the origin of the communication of being is the Trinitarian God, and its destination is the concrete entity: *Terminus ad quem est tota substantia rei.*[13] As the "likeness of divine goodness,"[14] being is "pure mediation."[15] It is something "complete and simple," but that nevertheless "does not subsist"[16] (7); instead, "to be" *inheres* in created things.[17] To speak with Balthasar, *esse* is "the streaming fullness of God's being in the condition of having been given away to the finite recipient."[18]

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[10] Ferdinand Ulrich, *Sein und Wesen: Spekulative Entfaltung einer anthropologischen Ontologie*. Privately published manuscript, 239 pp.

[11] Cf. Gustav Siewerth, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 2, *Der Thomismus als Identitätssystem*, rev. ed., with an introduction by Franz-Anton Schwarz (Duesseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1979). It should be noted that this edition contains changes with respect to the 1939 edition, which is the one Ulrich used; the altered texts are preserved as variations. On the relationship between Siewerth and Ulrich, see Bieler, *Freiheit als Gabe*, 261–66.

This apparently foreign talk about "being" as *quaedam participatio Dei et similitudo Ipsius*[19] is often today interpreted as a problematic Hellenization of Judeo-Christian thought. But being as *completum et simplex, sed non subsistens* is, in the first place, a conception that originates with Thomas Aquinas; it is an idea he conceived against the background of a Christian notion of creation founded on the Trinity, which is a notion that did not exist prior to Christ. Second, being, as Thomas understands it, stands in close proximity to Old Testament "Wisdom"[20] and to the Chinese Tao,[21] whereby what is specific to the Thomistic conception is the emphasis on being's kenotic aspect in the movement of finitization (non subsistens as completum et simplex), which Ulrich sets into relief above all in his later writings.[22]

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[12] Aquinas, *I Sent.*, 37.1.1c.

[13] *Summa theologiae* (*ST*), 1.45.1.2.

[14] *De ver.* 22.2.2.

[15] Siewerth, *Thomismus*, 171.

[16] "Verbi gratia esse significat aliquid completum et simplex sed non subsistens." Aquinas, *De pot.*, 1.1.

[17] Aquinas, *De pot.* 7.2.7.

[18] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord*, vol. 5, *The Realm of Metaphysics in the Modern World* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 631 (trans. slightly modified).

[19] Aquinas, *Div. nom.* 5.2 (660).

[20] "Wisdom, which we understand as the primal ordering of the world, as the mystery of its creation, is similarly present both in the supra-human creation and in the human-social realm. But if one wants to understand Wisdom as the Logos of the world, which is precisely the interpretation that imposes itself on the modern reader, one has nevertheless to keep in mind that the texts do not in fact speak of something ideal, something like a principle, or of a cosmic reason; instead, the texts are speaking of something created, which possesses its reality in the same way that the other works of creation do. This primal ordering is, however, not only present in creation; it is helpfully turned toward man, it is concerned about man: indeed, it addresses him directly." Gerhard von Rad, *Weisheit in Israel* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1970), 210–11. In Ulrich, this corresponds on man's part to "listening obedience," the living, active listening to the necessary sense of being.

[21] As Georg Scherer has properly understood: *Welt—Natur oder Schöpfung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990), 140.

[22] "And may it not be the case (as Ferdinand Ulrich sought to show) that the ultimate mystery of God's kenosis in Christ lies present in the metaphysical mystery of being: which lights up (*lichtet*) only insofar as it nihilates (*nichtet*), which conveys the divine glory only insofar as it already points ahead to the extreme humility of the cross." Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord*, vol. 4, *The Realm of Metaphysics in Antiquity* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 38 (trans. modified). The kenotic interpretation of being

The term "ideality" designates being insofar as it is a completum et simplex and a praehabens omnia subsequentia, or in other words insofar as it remains distinct from all existing things in its inexhaustible wealth (49; cf. also 46n16). "Reality" designates the concrete substance, insofar as it receives being through the form that "grows together" (con-cretum) with its matter (20–24). As an ontological moment, ideality stands in proximity to the verum, as Thomas understands it, which lies "closer" to being than does the good,[23] while "reality" is connected with the transcendentals res, unum,[24] and aliquid (156). *Esse* (in its ideality) and essence (reality), as the "principles" of being, represent the "phases" of being's movement of finitization, which proceed in conformity with the transcendentals, as Thomas presents them in *De veritate*, 1.1. (Because being's "movement of finitization" is in fact not a motion or a change,[25] we need to use the expression "phases" with care.)

The meaning, or "sense," of being's movement of finitization comes to light, finally, only with the last of the transcendentals Thomas presents in that particular text, namely, the bonum: Being is God's gift to his creation. Creation is an act of love (137), the affirmation of the creature by its creator. Ulrich's most significant novelty with respect to Siewerth's approach is the explicit reference to "bonicity" as a moment of being's movement of finitization, which is not yet indicated by "reality" alone.[26] While "reality" designates the substance as *actus primus*, what is most centrally at issue in bonicity is the created being's knowing and loving return to its end (*actus secundus*; 216–19, 227–31).[27] The sense of being comes to light in the human act of freedom as love: "Thus, the absolute positivity of being shines forth in the moment of bonicity, self-knowledge achieves its perfection, being draws

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implicitly takes up the intra–Old Testament criticism of Wisdom. Cf. on this point Horst Dietrich Preuss, *Einführungen in die alttestamentliche Weisheitsliteratur* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1987).

[23] *ST* 1.16.4.

[24] It is nevertheless important to keep in mind that "unum indifferenter se habet ad hoc quod respicit essentiam vel esse." *De ver.*, 21.5.8. The transcendentals may not be isolated from each other at bottom, nor from the moments of being's movement of finitization, as Ulrich will show in *Homo Abyssus*.

[25] *Summa contra Gentiles* (*SCG*), 2.17.

[26] To be sure, Ulrich appropriates Siewerth's language when he says that the absolute ground is "an always already perfected unity of ground, idea, and decision" (cf. Siewerth, *Thomismus*, 221) and draws a parallel between "ground, idea and decision" and "reality, ideality, and bonicity" (*Sein und Wesen*, 151). But by introducing the moment of bonicity, Ulrich develops a perspective that Siewerth himself had not sufficiently reflected on. Cf. Bieler, *Freiheit als Gabe*, 264*ff.*

[27] For the broader context in which the theme of the redditio to God lies in Aquinas, see Max Seckler, *Das Heil in der Geschichte: Geschichtstheologisches Denken bei Thomas von Aquin* (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1964).

its sustenance from the most profound and eloquent encounter in the unity with itself, and it consolidates itself in love" (156). Ulrich continues: "It is from this center of love that the nothingness of the nothing therefore first manifests its ultimate depths and is overcome. From the perspective of being, the nothing stands in the absolute crisis in the very ideality of being, as having sprung from being's positive self-affirming movement and as having been generated by the intellect. The radical nothingness of the nothing results from the absolute necessity and identity that resides in the loving center as being's absolute resoluteness and decisiveness in its freedom, and this origin strips from the nothing every dynamizing, idolizing, and objectivizing mask. The absolute positivity of being, the epiphany of the infinite necessity of love, robs all color from the nothing, all constitutivity from it in relation to being as being" (156–57). What Ulrich means by the expression "nothingness of the nothing" is that God creates absolutely ex nihilo, without presupposing anything, and thus being, to which nothing is external other than nonbeing (non-ens), does not require any completion by a nothing in order to be able to be *actualitas omnium actuum*.[28] Precisely because being is nonsubsistent in a positive sense, it does not need the nothing as a complementary principle. The nothing, which is exposed in its nothingness, is the nothing that the human spirit forms as its "beyond," when it attempts to take its own measure and thus "hold on to itself at its boundaries." In this way, man makes himself into a totality, over against which there can stand only the nothing, which then bursts open this pseudo-totality from below (without really being able to open man up in a genuine way). This pseudo-totality has precisely excluded the "critical horizon of [being's] non-subsistence," from which the human spirit proceeds (6).

Reading *Sein und Wesen* presents a challenge, because Ulrich undertakes the attempt to elucidate the dimensions of the phases of ideality, reality, and bonicity in their interplay, all the while avoiding the temptation to hypostasize being and displace it into vacillation: "As we began to unfold the temptation in its stages, we did not enter into the movement of finitization of act, which is sketched out according to the aforementioned phases, against the backdrop of the absolute. Instead, we extended the structure of the phases, as it were, from within to their furthest limits and back again into their initial configuration. In this respect, it could be said that we ourselves established the horizon of the temptation. We thus began inside of the structure of the phases and forced these apart from each other in both directions. In reaction to this, we thus went on to posit a countermovement (the vacillation!) against the movement of necessity, the shape of which was first sketched out by the structure of the phases as such. This countermovement consisted in the fact that we accepted the structure of the phases in their vacillating character, in order to view this vacillation at the same time from the perspective of act as such and no longer against the background of the absolute. This was possible for us only because, once we entered into the vacillation, we were able to include both act and essence at the same time in our vision" (97–98). This approach, which takes the vacillation as its point of departure, also describes the movement of the human spirit, which extends itself out into a totality by virtue of having neglected the reception of being (whose necessity it is nevertheless unable to avoid), insofar as it attempts to take control of being. The path Ulrich follows here presupposes that the "formal structures" that are conditioned by being's movement of finitization are also sustained in the perversion (31–32). With this effort to interpret the space measured out by the succumbing to the temptation back in the direct of being's movement of finitization, Ulrich announces his first attempt at the possibility of a "metaphysics as re-enactment" [*Metaphysik in der Wiederholung*] (32, 134, 140, 146, 148, 158, et passim.).

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[28] *De pot.* 7.2.9.

The fundamental temptation that faces philosophy, and indeed human thinking in general, consists in failing to recognize the gift-character of creation and thus to take note of its actuality. This violation of the truth has immediately destructive implications for one's interaction with creation. In his later works, Ulrich will describe these implications in extenso. With the concept of temptation, Ulrich takes up a theme that is not only biblical but also philosophical, which already Heidegger addressed: "Dasein prepares for itself the constant temptation to succumb to fallenness. Being-in-the-world is itself *full of temptation*."[29] To be sure, despite all the terminological resonances with Heidegger one hears in Ulrich's unfolding of this theme, he takes an entirely different path—even, and precisely, when he is "following" Heidegger.

In *Sein und Wesen*, Ulrich demonstrates that the temptation culminates in the encounter with the nothing, as it arises from the interplay between being and essence and from man's experience of this interplay: "The philosophical synthesis is able to emerge only when the temptation has come to term. It comes to term when the essence stands over against being in a new situation, in the encounter with the nothing, in which man experiences the essence as the condition of possibility of act as such in self-gift within the realm of finitude" (144). Being and essence are reciprocally related in being's movement of finitization. Without essence, being would not be able to arrive at subsistence in the entity, while, conversely, the essence arises from being, through which it is posited *by the absolute* (18). The absolute, however, does not bypass the act of being when it posits the essence. The "'solidity' of the positing of the essence" is sustained by the "positivity of being itself." "If this positivity were to disappear, then there would also no longer be any place in which the act of being, so to speak, is able to take hold of itself out beyond itself. In this case, the essence would lose its posited character and, moreover, its borders would become 'permeable to the nothing,' which in the same moment would become already dynamized" (26). If the impetus of the communication of being from above (i.e., from God) is darkened by the hardening of being in ideality, the "plasticized" nothing, which is formed by the human spirit, irrupts from below (56). Matter's *informitas*, which is in fact a reflection of divine goodness,[30] is falsely absolutized and thus gets perverted into the abyss of "monstrous 'nature'" (58), which threatens to swallow up man, with all his freedom. Caught in this way between the rock of self-withholding being and the hard place of the plasticized nothing that exerts itself from below, man is tempted to mediate ideality and reality to each other through his own efforts, and thus to create room for himself. In reality, however, man can only co-enact the convergence of ideality (being) and reality (essence) in bonicity, insofar as he *receives* his freedom in its always already posited unity of being and essence (substance as *esse habens*) as bonum. This comes to expression in an especially significant way in the phenomenon of language (139*ff.*, 151*ff.*),[31] which bears witness to the fact that man recapitulates the sense of being's movement of finitization in a *conscious*—that is, *free*—way, and therefore allows the necessary sense of being to come to expression like no other embodied creature.

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[29] Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 15th ed. (Tuebingen: Max Niemeyer, 1979), 177. [*Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 165. Trans. modified.]

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[30] Aquinas, *Div. nom.* 4.2 (297).

[31] Ulrich focuses more and more on the theme of "language" in his later writings. Cf., e.g., "Der Mensch und das Wort," in *Mysterium Salutis*, vol. 2 (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1967), 657–706; "Der eine Logos und die vielen Sprachen," in *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie*, vol. 12/13 (1968/69): 183–224; "Mythos-Logos-Erfahrung," in *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie*, vol. 14 (1970): 187–252.

From the perspective of the conception of creation as the communication of being, as expressed in man's act of freedom, there arises an "anthropological ontology," in which the metaphysical themes of God, Man, and World *coincide*. In his interpretation of this coincidence, Ulrich moves entirely within the space opened up by Aquinas, whose exposition of the doctrine of the transcendentals in *De veritate* 1.1 comes to a head in the unfolding of the human soul as "aliquid quod natum sit convenire cum omni ente."[32] What Ulrich is undertaking here is not at all an "anthropological reduction," such as Balthasar criticized.[33] Instead, he is developing an ontology that, in its personally responsible verbal witness, has surpassed itself in the direction of superessential being, and ultimately in the direction of Christ himself. This ontology thus receives its ultimate measure from Christ, the Son who has *become man*, because the incarnate Son is the one who has brought human freedom to perfection, insofar as he is characterized by receptivity just as we are.[34] Christ, "as the eternal word, is nothing other than the personally subsisting ideality of being *simpliciter*" (145), to which philosophy, in its return to its origin, is ordered. For man to give witness to himself and thus also to the world therefore means to give witness to Christ: "But to give witness to oneself in the ontological synthesis means in the end to give witness to everything else; it means to give witness, through a genuine assessment of the radical situation of one's own ideality, to the origin, to the word in its highest necessity, in whose mystery man rests in an essentially necessary way by virtue of the radical situation. But this means to bear witness to the word in its personal subsistence: to bear witness to Christ" (148). In this sense, Ulrich can, and must, speak of a "Christian philosophy" (186). Accordingly, he explains in this context the unity between natural and supernatural revelation with reference to Anselm of Canterbury (192–97).[35]

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[32] For his part, Aquinas refers to the Aristotelian understanding of the soul as "in a certain sense all things." Cf. on this point Georg Picht, *Aristoteles' "De anima,"* with an introduction by Enno Rudolph (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987), 164*ff.*

[33] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Love Alone Is Credible* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 31–50. Ulrich made the following observation regarding the structure of HA: "The first part of this work unfolds the ontological structure of being's movement of finitization, in which the anthropological horizon, within which this movement occurs, remains yet hidden. This horizon first comes explicitly to the fore in the second part, and is determined in this case according to the essential ordinations of the structure of the faculties. In this way, we overcome both an object-bound ontology and a subject-centered anthropology within the transcendental horizon of superessential being." "Politische Macht-Philosophie-Gnade," in *Il problema del potere politico: Atti del XVIII. Convegno internazionale del Centro di studi filosofici, Gallarate 1963* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1964), 383n1.

[34] *ST* 1.33.3.2.

From the perspective of philosophy's inevitable self-transcendence toward the revelation of God in Christ, it becomes evident that the self-critique philosophy seeks is possible only on the basis of theology, and receives its necessity precisely from that foundation (142). But this does not at all mean that theology deprives philosophy of its own capacities; instead, according to the axiom "gratia non destruit, sed supponit et perficit naturam," philosophy is precisely thereby liberated to be fully itself, since it is enabled to judge the extent to which it has based itself on "pseudo-theological conceptions" (47; cf. also 173): "The ground in which the proper roots of the philosophical temptation lies gradually becomes apparent. The roots lie in theology itself" (129). If being's movement of finitization (which is phenomenologically unfolded by Thomas himself![36]) is viewed against the backdrop of the absolute self-giving Trinitarian God (186*ff.*), an "anthropological understanding of the ontological principles" (188) becomes necessary, since this understanding allows one to think through the relationship between being and essence in the categories of giving and receiving. No sphere of creation, after all, may be separated from the effective power of the Creator who gives himself in being, and thus all being is pervaded through and through by the gift character of creation. The necessary "crisis" (i.e., "discerning decision," 8*ff.*) that philosophy is required to undertake is the viewing of being's movement of finitization as the decision of love that comes to pass in the ontological moments of ideality, reality, and bonicity.[37]

The constructive meaning of an anthropological ontology, which every philosophical self-critique seeks, is the revelatory unfolding of the entire breadth and depth of being's movement of finitization (8). This includes not only an ontology of the individual (215–39),[38] which man's existence in space and time brings into focus, as Ulrich explains it, for example, in his engagement with Heidegger (71–77), but also the theme of "world," which Ulrich conceives in connection with the notion of essence (20–24).

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[35] Ulrich continues this reflection in an essay that is as subtle as it is profound, namely, "Cur non video praesentem? Zur Implikation der 'grriechischen' und 'lateinischen' Denkform bei Anselm und Scotus Erigena," *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 22 (1975): 70–170.

[36] Cf. Bieler, *Freiheit als Gabe,* 226–41.

[37] Hans Urs von Balthasar has a similar conception of philosophy. On this, see "Meta-anthropology and Christology: On the Philosophy of Hans Urs von Balthasar," *Communio* 20 (Spring 1993): 129–46.

[38] On this point, see Ulrich's later essay "Zur Ontologie des Menschen," offprint from *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie* 7 (1963): 110 pp.

Ulrich laid the foundations of his thought with *Sein und Wesen*. The essay "An Attempt at a Speculative Unfolding of an Anthropological Doctrine of First Principles, Following the Outline Given by Anton Günther in his Euristheus und Heracles," written in 1955,[39] contains an interesting engagement with Anton Günther, to be sure, but does not go far beyond *Sein und Wesen* in developing Ulrich's own position. The same cannot be said for Ulrich's dissertation, "To What Extent Does the Construction of the Constitution of Substance Provide the Measure for the Construction of the Concept of Matter in Suarez, Duns Scotus, and Thomas?," from 1955.[40] In this dissertation, Ulrich conceives being's movement of finitization as a "movement into subsistence," and characterizes this latter movement, more specifically, as a "movement of perfection" (perfectio in the sense of the Thomistic bonum[41]) (106). The self-emptying of being as non subsistens stands out more fully in the light of the human act of freedom and of bonicity (102). We thereby catch sight of the possibility of elucidating the sense of being's nonsubsistence explicitly on the basis of the subsistence of man, especially as liberated by Christ. In this text, moreover, Ulrich develops important presuppositions for a "metaphysics as reenactment."

In the preface to *Homo Abyssus*, Ulrich writes that what he is presenting in this book is the essentially unchanged principal section of his Salzburg Habilitation *Versuch einer spekulativen Entfaltung des Menschenwesens in der Seinsteilhabe* (1958). Apart from insignificant details, the habilitation contains the same basic divisions and subsections as *Homo Abyssus*. But Ulrich reworked the material in *Homo Abyssus* and brought it further. One of the things he more or less left out, however, is his dialogue with other authors, which he conducted mostly in the habilitation's footnotes. In the habilitation, it becomes quite clear how much everything crystallizes around the central point of the conception of being as completum et simplex, sed non subsistens. Differently from Siewerth, Ulrich explicitly emphasizes that being as completum et simplex, sed non subsistens, is *not* a contradiction:[42] "We therefore see no contradiction in the fact that esse is a completum et simplex, *sed* non subsistens, or in other words in characterizing esse as 'nothing,' as long as what thereby comes to expression is its 'non subsistent' character." Precisely *because* being is "'nothing,' it is perfectio omnium perfectionum. There is no contradiction in this."

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[39] *Versuch einer spekulativen Entfaltung einer anthropologischen Urgrundlehre nach dem Entwurf in Anton Günther's Euristheus und Heracles*, private printing (1955), 111 pp.

[40] Ferdinand Ulrich, "Inwiefern ist die Konstruktion der Substanzkonstitution massgebend für die Konstruktion des Materiebegriffes bei Suarez, Duns Scotus und Thomas?," private printing (doctoral diss., Ludwig Maximalian University of Munich, 1955), 135 pp.

[41] "Perfectum autem habet rationem boni," Div. nom. 3.1 (227).

[42] See Siewerth, *Thomismus*, 130.

Being may appear as a contradiction because whoever reflects on being is inevitably exposed to the danger of substantializing it, conceiving it as a quasi-thing-like entity of a curious sort. Conversely, there is also the danger of condemning being to a mere notion [*Vorstellung*], which makes it seem superfluous to speak at all of being as actus essendi, on the basis of which things are called "entities." In Christian terms, these two dangers (which are flip sides of the same coin!) arise from man's alienation from God, which the tradition calls "original sin,"[43] because the conception of being as contradiction reflects the bad "yes and no at once" that the serpent projects onto God (Gn 3:1–7).[44]

Both dangers can be withstood only if being is understood in a rigorous way as gift, *through which*—as pure mediation and as a streaming forth—creation is simultaneously united with the Creator and distinguished from him. As gift, being is pure self-emptying, which as such always already inheres in individual creatures and awakens them to life. (Later, in his book *Atheismus und Menschwerdung*, Ulrich will beautifully illustrate this idea using the image of the light that awakens the appearing world in its self-manifestation as the sun breaks through the horizon at dawn.[45]) If being is interpreted as completum et simplex, sed non subsistens, which God has poured into beings through his self-gift, then it becomes clear that the apparent contradiction of being *has always already been resolved*: "One can therefore say—if we may use the expression—that the necessary sense of being 'as such' in the ideal vacillation *has been transnihilated (Durchnichtet), but that, through this transnihilation, being has always already been what it is.* By virtue of this transnihilation, and 'against the background of God,' being has always already resolved its contradiction, since only a hubristic reason can hypostasize being by identifying it with thought." What Ulrich means by the expression "ideal vacillation" is the hypostasizing of being (in the moment of ideality), by virtue of which being appears as something that "holds on to itself," that is, as something that is not fluid, something that has not yet arrived in the various things that are. Being in this case is simultaneously given and not given (yes and no at once), as something wholly different both from God and from beings—and thus in reality *not* given. God, who is the origin of being, must correspondingly appear as a power that does not set creation free, but rather keeps it dependent on him in a disordered way. The only logical consequence of this bad dependence is man's rebellion against this tyrant, which, on the basis of being's presumed vacillation, acquires the form of the temptation to resolve the experienced contradiction according to its own terms. This is the point at which Ulrich begins his engagement with Hegel, whose *Logic* seeks to compel the absolute into finitude through the cold progression of the necessary steps of reason.

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[43] See Ferdinand Ulrich, *Atheismus und Menschwerdung*, 2nd ed. (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1975), 22, and Gustav Siewerth, *Die christliche Erbsündenlehre* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1964).

[44] See HA, B.I.7. [Ulrich is referring to the line in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, "To say 'ay' and 'no' . . . was no good divinity," which gets translated into German as *schlechte Theologie*, i.e., "bad theology." –Trans.].

[45] Ulrich, *Atheismus und Menschwerdung*, 23–28.

But, according to Ulrich, the distress of the contradiction of being in the vacillation has always already been relieved by virtue of the "need-relieving character (*Not-wendigkeit*) of divine goodness." On the basis of God's communication of being, being is always already positive reality. With respect to God, the "crisis" of being has always already been decided; that is, being's movement of finitization has been carried out in such a way that God has set beings free by means of being: "We call the beginning of the unfolding of the difference between being and beings the 'crisis of being,' insofar as what comes to decision in this difference is the self-exchange of being and 'nothing,' i.e., insofar as there occurs in this difference the sublation of the contradiction that finite reason posits insofar as it holds onto being 'as such.'" "Crisis" signifies "a decision that sets apart, or in other words, it indicates discernment as decision," but also judgment.[46] Because of the crisis that God has already carried out, the nonsubsistence of being is not a deficiency, but instead it gives evidence of the fact that being has been definitively handed over to beings, in such a way that beings are open to God. This is why Ulrich is able to say with Heidegger that being and nothing are "exchanged for one another."[47] But, in contrast to Heidegger, Ulrich maintains that being and nothing do not stand next to each other; instead, nonsubsistence "belongs 'to being.'"

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[46] We also see this twofold meaning of "crisis" in the Gospel of John; see Josef Blank, *Krisis: Untersuchungen zur johanneischen Christologie und Eschatologie* (Freiburg: Lambertus-Verlag, 1964), 41–42.

[47] Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Zur Seinsfrage*, 4th ed. (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), 39. ["On the Question of Being," in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 317.]

For Ulrich, it is very important to see that being does not carry out the crisis "by itself" [*von sich aus*]. If it did, being would be an in-completum, seeking its own way into subsistence. This would also imply a depotentiating of God, who would prove to be incapable of being as completum et simplex, sed non subsistens. Being, however, is necessarily a completum et simplex, sed non subsistens. If Ulrich speaks of the "necessary sense of being," by means of which being is brought into crisis, then he sees this necessity as "having its seal in the bonitas divina, at which the voluntas divina aims." The necessary sense of being is therefore the expression of God's freedom and not the pregivenness of a priori possibilities, in relation to which God would have to orient himself.[48] The sense of being is necessary because God has resolved to communicate being, and indeed *has already* carried this out.

Homo Abyssus

With the explanation of the noncontradictory character of being, interpreted as completum et simplex, sed non subsistens, we have opened the gate for an unfolding of Ulrich's principal concern, as he presents it in its ripened form in *Homo Abyssus*. The book's title already points to the fact that *man*, as the creature bestowed with freedom, acquires a key function in Ulrich's thought. But the title also signals that man remains an inexhaustible *mystery*

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48. Cf. on this Ulrich's dissertation, "Inwiefern ist die Konstruktion der Substanzkonstitution." Walter Kern has criticized Ulrich's interpretation of the possibilia, objecting that he—in contrast to Thomas Aquinas—puts the created quiddities, as they exist "in God, immediately 'in God's essence,' bypassing the space of the divine intellect": see his review of HA in *Scholastik* 37 (1962): 404. But Thomas himself says: "Unde creatura in Deo est creatrix essentia" (*Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura* 1.2 [91]; cf. also *De pot.* 3.16.24). To be sure, Thomas recognizes a plurality of ideas, but these are entirely included within God's essence and can in no way limit God's freedom as preconditions (in the sense of presenting a "set of possible creations" from which God would make a selection) [Kern, 404]: "Of possibles God has what Saint Thomas calls *simplex intelligentia*, God knowing them in knowing his own power. Never having distinct being, they are not known as distinct things and so God knows them not *per ideas distinctas* but *per cognitionem suae potentia in qua sunt*. This is a knowledge of what does not exist outside the seer." Vivian Boland, *Ideas in God According to Saint Thomas Aquinas: Sources and Synthesis*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought 69 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 231. Thomas can go so far as to say, "Wherefore since neither on the part of the divine power which is infinite, nor of the divine goodness which stands not in need of creatures, can a reason be assigned for the particular disposition of the universe this reason must be found in the mere will of the Creator: so that if it be asked why the heavens are of such and such a size, no other reason can be given except that their maker willed it so" (*De pot.* 3.17. Cf. also *De ver.*, 23.2.3; *ST* 1.19.4). On this problem in general, see James Ross, "Aquinas's Exemplarism, Aquinas's Voluntarism," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 64 (1990): 171–98; idem, "Response to Maurer and Dewan," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 65 (1991): 235–43 (this is a reply to Armand Maurer ["James Ross on the Divine Ideas: A Reply," 213–20] and Lawrence Dewan ["St. Thomas, James Ross, and Exemplarism: A Reply], which appeared in the same issue).

to himself, because, as esse habens by virtue of being, which "simpliciter" is *superior ad esse hominem,*[49] he has his ground [*Grund*] in the Creator: Homo *abyssus* [*Abgrund*].[50]

Ulrich's point of departure in presenting man as the "normative pattern (*die Richte*) and fundamental form of the ontological difference between being and beings" and as "the subject of participation in being that God most ultimately intended" is the power of the intellect as that *a quo homo est id quod est.*[51] By making this claim, Ulrich does not intend to "design man or construct him on the basis of a single power"; instead, he is seeking to open up the theme of participation in being by means of the question concerning the intellect in via, that is, the intellect as it exists as embodied in the world, a question that cannot be separated from the necessity of a decision of the whole person. The intellect always begins its operations already from within the sphere of sense perception, and thus always refers to the entities it encounters. At the same time, however, as spirit, the intellect has also always already been given the gift of the light of being, which opens it up to being as what is innermost in all things[52]: the intellect "is always already both emptied out into the *exterius* and at the same time gathered up and unified in the *interius* of the intus-legere. And thus it follows its circular path." Already in the difference between intellectus, as the power that knows first principles, and ratio, which is "reason in via,"[53] it becomes apparent that the human form is pervaded from top to bottom by being's movement of finitization, and that means by the sense of being, which man is meant to recapitulate as an expression of divine goodness. The *completum et simplex, sed non subsistens*"—that is, the gift character of being—stamps its character on the outermost branches of human existence, and reason's movement of intro- and extroversion in the act of knowing is the concrete exposition of being's movement into subsistence in the spatiotemporal dimensions of human existence. The unfolding of the logic of the human powers (not only the power of the intellect) as a logic founded in being's movement of finitization is one of the most important philosophical contributions that Ulrich achieves in *Homo Abyssus.*

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[49] *ST* 3.16.9.2. See HA, B.II.4.A, et passim.

[50] Aquinas, *Reportationes in psalmos* 41.5 (*Opera Omnia*, vol. 6, ed. Roberto Busa, 1980, 111): *Abyssus: idest homo; qui vocatur abyssus.*

[51] Aquinas, *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio* 1.1 (2). See HA, B.II.1.C.

[52] "Esse autem est illud quod est magis intimum cuilibet, et quod profundius omnibust inest." *ST* 1.8.1.

[53] Ulrich, "Zur Ontologie des Menschen," 32.

In its engagement with being as being, effective freedom does not allow itself to get mired in the knowing of being, since doing so would transpose being into the vacillation and thus would betray thinking as thanking;[54] moreover, it would hand being over to contradiction and would thus have to take over for itself the role of the necessary sense of being. At the same time, however, freedom does not limit itself in a positivistic way to isolated beings. Instead, it receives the always already posited being from the ontological difference. It apprehends being "analogously," while the thinking bounded by contradiction collapses on the one hand into the equivocity of a fragmented reality and on the other hand into the univocity of a being that holds on to itself. Univocity and equivocity are simply flip sides of the same refusal to receive being. We see here "that the fixing of being in the 'ideal vacillation' . . . and the isolation of the essence in the *unitas per seipsam* (as isolated positing of reality) are one and the same."

Insofar as Ulrich constantly guides everything back to the central point of man's decision for the necessary sense of being, his project acquires a dramatic character. Like Blondel, Ulrich believes that what is ultimately at issue in every sphere of human existence is a Yes or a No to God,[55] and this decision does not concern only the isolated individual, but in fact affects the entire cosmos.[56] Ulrich's understanding of this point must certainly have been significant for Balthasar's *Theodrama*, and in fact Ulrich makes reference to the Book of Revelation [*Apokalypse*], just as Balthasar does.[57]

In the judgment of existence, which is a primal division of being [*die Urtei-*

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[54] Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Was heisst Denken?*, 3rd ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1971), 91*ff.* Glenn Grey, trans., *What Is Called Thinking?* (New York: Harper, 1976), 139*ff.*

[55] "Thus, through the mechanism of the interior life, we are led to an alternative that sums up all the teachings of practice. Man, by himself, cannot be what he already is in spite of himself, what he claims to become voluntarily. Yes or no, will he will to live, even to the point of dying, so to speak, by consenting to be supplanted by God? Or else, will he pretend to be self-sufficient without God, profit by His necessary presence without making it voluntary, borrow from Him the strength to get along without Him, and will infinitely without willing the Infinite? To will and not to be able, to be able and not to will, that is the very option that presents itself to freedom: 'to love oneself to the contempt of God, to love God to the contempt of self.' Not that this tragic opposition is revealed to us with such sharpness and rigor, but if the thought that there is 'something to be done with life' occurs to us, that is enough for even the most coarse to be called as well to resolve the great business of life, the one thing necessary." Blondel, *Action (1893): Essay on a Critique of Life and a Science of Practice* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 327.

[56] Blondel, *Action (1893)*, 263: "In acting, man does not limit his outlook to the family, to the city, to humanity. He projects his intention still further. As the Stoics said quite rightly, he inserts himself into the universe as a whole."

[57] Cf. already Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Apokalypse der deutschen Seele: Studien zur einer Lehre von letzten Haltungen*, vol. 1, *Der deutsche Idealismus* (Salzburg: Pustet, 1937; Freiburg: Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln, 1998); idem, *Theodrama*, vol. 4, *The Action* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 15–67.

lung des Seins] and in which man allows the entity to come to expression, man enacts "*his proper essence as the fundamental form of the cosmos in all the dimensions of its existence.*" By judging, he sets creation free and decides it himself, in gratitude. What he measures in a definitive way in so doing is his own being, since he "lets be" both "man and world at one stroke" in his openness to being; this is the case insofar as, in passing judgment, finite reason posits "man's unity and that of the world just as necessarily as it does the unity of God, and indeed it does so on the basis of ontological participation, which occurs according to the emanation of being's procession from God (and not its subsisting next to God)."[58] In his perception of beings, man allows them to show themselves forth from their own ground. Nevertheless, beings come to expression only *through* man, and *not from him*, which is to say that man "can carry out the crisis of being only because this crisis has always already been decided for him beforehand, by virtue of the power of the necessary sense of being, in the light of love. Man's positing of the world thus unveils itself as the human spirit's allowing itself to be taken up into the world." By virtue of this disponibility, man is ordered to the encounter with beings and reason is grasped as both intellectus agens and intellectus possibilis according to the "*luminous night of being*":[59] "The light exchanges itself for the night, the luminosity of the light is night 'for' man, since the light of being becomes luminous only in and among the multiplicity of material beings. This is why thinking begins in the outermost dimension of sensibility." But at the same time, it also comes to completion in the sensible dimension[60]—in the encounter with other human beings: "Just as the essence is never there beyond the appearance except as abstract concept, so too the birth of the interior word in man's return to himself does not suffice. The 'interior word' thus gives itself an outward 'form' [*'bildet' sich aus*]; it takes on the body of breath, it comes forth, and is sent on its way. It is only in this incarnation that man is 'speakingly' present as a sign-maker [*ein Zeigender*] (dic-ere = Zeig-en), in whose eloquent signs things exhibit themselves from themselves and become manifest. Being's wholly enacted movement of finitization thus manifests itself in personal dialogue, wherein being opens itself up at the same time in its 'ontological presence.'"

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[58] Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*, 6th ed., 15. ["The Essence of Truth," in *Pathmarks*, 136–54, here 144]: "Freedom for what is opened up in an open region lets beings be the beings they are. Freedom now reveals itself as letting beings be."

[59] On this expression, which evokes a mystical theme (St. John of the Cross), see Ulrich, *Sein und Wesen*, 209.

[60] Cf. Bieler, *Freiheit als Gabe*, 329.

Because, in his judging, man makes a decision concerning being's movement of finitization, which *is* already decided by God, it follows that what is decided in judgment concerns not only beings; instead, man always at the same time makes a decision "regarding" God. Wherever the necessary sense of being fails, the gift character of creation is negated and the eternal Father, who is the origin of all things as the fontalis plenitudo, is ultimately thereby depotentiated. By referring here to the eternal Father, whose goodness is in a certain sense the Archimedean point of Christian thinking about being,[61] Ulrich shows in a decisive way how important the doctrine of the Trinity is for philosophy.[62] Everything has its ultimate foundation in the difference between the Father and the Son, who breathe forth together the Holy Spirit. It is from this vantage alone that even creation itself, which is accessible to natural reason, is ultimately intelligible,[63] as Thomas Aquinas emphasizes.[64] If creation is conceived as a gift that has not yet been given, a gift that requires a reason founded in being as contradiction in order to be made properly fluid, then God is stamped as incapable of genuine giving and the inner essence of God is darkened, insofar as the Father is depotentiated and stopped up in himself, because the Father's presumed impotence would also have to extend to his relation to his Son. A false conception of creation thus leads in fact to a false conception of God:[65] "If the Father is not 'able' to divest himself of the entire divine essence to the Son in the Son's procession, then there would remain, so to speak, a 'not yet' communicated remainder of the divine essence, which from the perspective of the Son in relation to the Father manifests itself as a remainder of a not yet obtained divine nature, or to put it in other words: The divine *essence* is not yet *personally* conveyed by the Father out of mere 'abstract identity' with itself. The Son would thus possess the imperfectly mediated divine nature ('not-yet-God') as a negation, which however means in relation to the divine nature: as something that is *finite* in itself. The origin (Father) would by the same token be burdened with the negation (impotence) of the *not yet mediated essence.*" Ulrich therefore justly observes: "The fate of modern metaphysics was enabled by this 'impotence of God's fatherhood.'"[66]

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[61] Cf. on this theme Marie-Joseph Le Guillou, *Das Mysterium des Vaters* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1974).

[62] "The crisis of being, however, can be undergone only on the basis of the revelation of the triune God, which is received in faith. The closure to this supernatural dimension of God's revelation that has come to pass in history leads inescapably to a substantializing of being, insofar as being's superessentiality is always already sealed in the exinanitio into the positively subsisting res." HA, A.IX.10.

[63] "Respondeo quod creationem esse, non tantum fides tenet, sed etiam ratio demonstrat." Aquinas, *2 Sent.* 1.1.2.

[64] "Cognitio divinarum Personarum fuit necessaria nobis dupliciter. Uno modo, ad recte sentiendum de creatione rerum." *ST* 1.32.1.3.

[65] *SCG* 2.3 (869).

Being as completum et simplex, sed non subsistens can ultimately be conceived as noncontradictory only if it is clear that the ontological difference "has always already been absolutely 'achieved' ['*getan*'] as difference in God according to the 'mode' of God." "Because everything actual causes something similar to itself, the ground of the possibility of the ontological difference lies hidden in God. Since '*difference itself is a certain being*,' the ground of the possibility of the ontological difference must be sublated in God's absolute actuality in the *actuality of a difference.*"[67] Precisely this presupposes that the Father, in the *difference between giver (Father) and gift (Son)*, is able to hand over the entire fullness of the Godhead to the Son so perfectly that he may breathe forth the Spirit together with the Son.[68] Everything turns on this difference. It is only on its basis that there is a living logic of living being, which transcends a mere two-valued logic.[69] It is only on this basis that there is also the overcoming of all the contradiction of sin: "The Son's obedience even in death, even in hell, is his perfect *identity* in all contradiction. By the same token, it is also the vanquishing of the ultimate contradiction through this identity, which infiltrates it, and all things, from below."[70]

Whenever the eternal difference between the giver (Father) and the gift (Son) is left in shadow, the relationship between substance and accidents, soul and body, and the like all come to grief. The essence that is constituted out of form and matter is no longer conceived in the light of superessential being—that is, in the light of the freedom of the Creator God—but is rather isolated and posited in itself. What results is the essentializing of being and the logicizing of the spirit; this corresponds to the positing of possibilia in God, to which the thus depotentiated God must conform in his action. Reason thus loses its "morning freshness"—that is, its wonder—and saves itself

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[66] On this point, see Bieler, *Freiheit als Gabe*, 28–71.

[67] Ulrich departs from Heidegger on this point: HA, A.VI.1.C; "Zur Ontologie des Menschen," 13–14n15.

[68] Cf., Bieler, *Freiheit als Gabe*, 173–209; idem, *Befreiung der Freiheit: Zur Theologie der stellvertretenden Sühne* (Freiburg: Herder, 1996), 307–22; idem, "Die Radikalität der Versöhnung: Der ökumenische Dialog und das Problem der theologischen Denkform," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 123 (1998): 229–31.

[69] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theologic*, vol. 2, *The Truth of God* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 29*ff.*

[70] Balthasar, *Truth of God*, 354.

"by securing 'valid laws,'" which are no longer understood in terms of the living exchange between freedoms, but instead only as mere "positings." Moreover, reason in its perversion cements this darkening of creation insofar as it casts the "veil of a challenging claim (with respect to man)" over creation in its "unleashed spontaneity of the understanding." Man begins to take it for granted that it is legitimate to subject nature to a relentless interrogation. The practical consequences of such an interaction with creation are evident.

The difference between giver and gift—and thus the mystery of being—opens itself up to man only if he is ready to receive himself in his finitude and to receive everything else in an openness to the God revealed in Christ, as a gift. The archetype of such creaturely receptivity, for Ulrich, is Mary, the Mother of Jesus, who according to Thomas Aquinas speaks her Yes on behalf of the whole human race.[71] In Mary of Nazareth, it becomes clear "how the finite, precisely as finite, is a reflection of God's triune act of love." In Mary, the Father's auctoritas as the augmentation of existence is able to become wholly and by itself sufficiently effective in the power of the Holy Spirit in a manner we can describe in terms of the Realsymbol,[72] so that Mary becomes the archetype of effective human freedom in relation to God in Christ. "In this woman, it becomes evident how the finite can become a space of listening obedience to the superessentiality of being, without this latter becoming trapped inside of a finite nature." It would be far too easy to dismiss this as the idiosyncrasy of a Catholic philosopher and as an example of allowing theology to intrude improperly on a philosophical matter. Ulrich emphasizes that Mary is *simultaneously* virgin and mother, and in doing so appeals to Meister Eckhart (see the reference to W. Klein).[73] In the simultaneity of virginity (receptivity) and motherhood (giving), Mary reflects the simultaneity of the completum et simplex, sed non subsistens of being in the mode of fruitful reception, so that what we see in Mary can be transposed into precise philosophical terms: The *proprium susceptivum* is the substance that—to the extent that it *is*—is *not* deficient and can allow the *accidents to proceed from it* because it *has received* "to be."[74] Even if one has difficulties with the notion that the Mother of Jesus remained virginal, one will nevertheless be able to admit at least this much: what is being expressed by virginity as pure receptivity is—as Eckhart too underscores—an inalienable moment of human freedom, which, however lofty the place of Mary, concerns *every* human being, as it has been beautifully expressed in the Jewish tradition: "Rabbi Jzchak Eisik said: 'The meaning of life is: 'give and receive.' Every human being ought to be both a giver and a receiver. Whoever is not both of these at once is a tree without fruits."[75]

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[71] *ST* 3.30.1.

[72] The theme of authority as the "augmentation of existence" (*Gegenwart der Freiheit* [Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1974], 34], is one Ulrich has taken up repeatedly, and most explicitly in his essay "Gott unser Vater," *Internationale katholische Zeitschrift Communio* 1 (1975): 29–38.

[73] Cf. Meister Eckhart, *Deutsche Predigten und Traktate*, ed. Josef Quint (Munich: Diogenes, 1963), 159*ff.* On the prehistory of the theme of the birth of God from the Virgin Mother in Eckhart, see Hugo Rahner, "Die Gottesgeburt: Die Lehre der Kirchenväter von der Geburt Christi aus dem Herzen der Kirche und der Gläubigen," in *Symbole der Kirche: Die Ekklesiologie der Väter* (Salzburg: Müller, 1964), 13–87. Virginity and motherhood, receiving and giving, poverty and wealth, cannot be separated from each other as isolated objects. Virginity is not a mere emptiness waiting for a foreign wealth, but instead it *is* already *rich* poverty as free openness to God. *Poverty is itself wealth* and for that very reason opens up genuine space to be filled by God's abundance. What is said below on the unity of life and death holds also for the unity of virginity and motherhood. Cf. also *Gebet als geschöpflicher Grundakt* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1973), 76*ff.*

The intelligible structure of creation can be understood as a whole in the light of the interplay between the generous God and the liberated creature. This structure retains its integrity throughout the whole of the multiplicity and diversity of creation, upon which man is dependent if he wishes to turn back to God. Ulrich develops this intelligible structure in its full breadth, from matter through the dimensions of space and time and evolution, to the relation between spirit and body and the interplay of ontological principles (being and essence) in the relation between man, woman, and child.[76] Especially noteworthy in all this is his analysis of mathematics and his interpretation of the transcendentals. Ulrich returns to these themes repeatedly in his later writings, and illuminates them from ever new perspectives.

In receiving himself from and returning himself to his Creator, man is especially dependent on his fellow human beings, who represent for him the presence of God in an especially prominent way: "The consonance of beings achieves its ultimate order [*Ordnung*] and unity in the human face. It is not in a general image of man, but rather in the concrete face of the concrete man in his historicity." With this culmination in the direct encounter with other human beings, Ulrich opens up the notion of the human soul's convenientia with all beings. This convenientia, which Aquinas developed in *De veritate* 1.1 into a dialogical philosophy, is something to which Ulrich gave increasing weight in his later writings.[77] He thus finds himself following the line of Thomas, insofar as Thomas developed his entire metaphysics against the horizon of God's friendship with man and therefore was already for his part dialogically "fructified."[78] In a word, Ulrich's great conceptual achievement in *Homo Abyssus* lies in the unfolding and actualization of Thomistic metaphysics from the root of a fundamental conception of being, embedded in the Trinity and dimensioned dialogically, as completum et simplex, sed non subsistens, specifically as this comes to light in the effective act of human freedom. (The paradigm of this endeavor can be found in Ulrich's speculative unfolding of *De veritate*, 1.1.) He thus worked out the inner logic of this metaphysics and opened it up in an as-yet-unknown radicality to a dialogue with modern thought.

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[74] Through being, the creature "transcends into God's absolute uncausedness" (HA, xx77): "*Esse absolute prae-intelligitur causae*. Therefore, the positive reality as the posited unity of being and essence possesses the inherent character of being uncaused, in which all of the creation of the finite lies, prior to the movement into subsistence, since the eternal peace of the Creator God is revealed in it: specifically, the peace of the unoriginate Father." But this "uncaused character" is precisely something the creature has *received*, so that being uncaused and being caused necessarily go together.

[75] Martin Buber, *Die Erzählungen der Chassidim* (Zurich: Manesse Verlag, 1949), 709.

[76] One finds important points of contact with the concerns of feminist theology above all in Ulrich's book *Der Mensch als Anfang: Zur philosophischen Anthropologie der Kindheit* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1970).

Ulrich not only opens up Thomistic metaphysics for a dialogue with other projects, but also in fact conducts such a dialogue already himself—most explicitly with Hegel[79] and Nietzsche,[80] but also with Marx, Kierkegaard,[81] Freud,[82] and others. The aim he pursues in this dialogue is what he calls a

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[77] Johannes Heinrichs justly observed that "the principle of dialogue is already determinative, albeit in an unthematic way, in this extraordinary book." "Sinn und Intersubjektivität: Zur Vermittlung von transzendentalphilosophischem und dialogischem Denken in einer 'transzendentalen Dialogik,'" *Theologie und Philosophie* 45 (1970): 190n52. Heinrichs has recently referred again to the "profound, though difficult work" *Homo Abyssus* in another essay: "Trinitarisches Denken zwischen Orthodoxie und Vernunft: Die 'Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik' der 'Baberger Schule,'" part 1, *Philosophischer Literaturanzeiger* 50 (1977): 279n5. Ulrich already spoke of the "dialogical conception of existence" in an early text: "Zur Ontologie des Menschen," 28.

[78] Cf. Bieler, *Freiheit als Gabe*, 96–107, 363–71, and most recently, Holger Dörnemann, *Freundschaft als Paradigma der Erlösung*, Bonner dogmatische Studien 25 (Würzburg: Echter, 1997), which contains a comprehensive bibliography on the relevant literature (207–46).

[79] Cf., e.g., "Begriff und Glaube," *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 17 (1970): 344–99; idem, "Hegel und die Frage nach der reinen Endlichkeit," in *Theorein: Rivista Trimestrale di Filosofia*, vols. 1–4 (Polermo: Manfredi Editore, 1972): 65–97.

[80] Cf., e.g., "Das theologische Apriori des neuzeitlichen Atheismus," in *Il problema dell'ateismo: Atti del XVI. Convegno internazionale del Centro di Studi filosofici* (Gallarate, 1961) (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1962), 341–77; "Nietzsche und di atheistische Sinngebung des Sinnlosen," in *Atheismus kritisch betrachtet: Beiträge zum Atheismusproblem der Gegenwart* (Munich: Erich Wewel Verlag, 1971), 27–70.

[81] "Fragwürdigkeit des Menschen und Gottesfrage bei Marx, Nietzsche und Kierkegaard," unpublished manuscript, Hochschule für Philosophie (Munich) (Pullach), 1969.

[82] "Die Dialektik von Leben und Tod im Phänomen der Kultur," unpublished paper for *Universalité de la science et pluralité des cultures, Ixe Rencontre internationale*, Instit. internat. "A. Rosmini," Bozen (29.8–3.9), 1969, 82 pp. [This text has since been published in *Leben in der Einheit von Leben und Tod*, vol. 2 of Ulrich's *Schriften*, ed. Martin Bieler and Stefan Oster (Freiburg: Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln, 1999), 231–341. –Trans.]

"metaphysics as reenactment": "By the phrase 'metaphysics as reenactment,' we understand a speculative reductio of finite reason's endeavors to the unifying and life-giving roots that blossom forth in being's movement of finitization. The original locus of this a priori paradigm [*Maßgestalt*] is man, insofar as he is the subsisting focal point of being's movement of finitization." According to Ulrich, the only way to do justice to philosophical anthropology is to transcend anthropology into Christology, for it is only the revelation of God in Jesus Christ that is able to keep one from closing the ontological difference in a pseudo-theological fashion and thus eliminating the superessentiality of being. Christ alone makes evident the extent to which the ontological difference is sublated in God.

The question immediately arises, of course, whether, with his "metaphysics as reenactment," Ulrich is carrying out the very fatal fixing and essentializing of being he means precisely to prevent. Is he not running the risk here of reducing the wealth of human thought to a system with the help of a handy formula? Ulrich denies this by referring to the fact that "reason's enactment of being's movement of finitization has its ultimate roots in the love that has always already broken through the essentialized ideality of the verum." It becomes clear, already in *Homo Abyssus*, that what is at issue in the "metaphysics as reenactment" is the foundation of a *philosophy of vicarious representation*, which does not criticize forms of thought from the outside, but, by passing through the movement of finitization that in a "formal and structural" way remains in place "even in the most extreme perversion," reaches through the perversion to the other, in his innermost being, to such an extent "that the 'yes' accrues to the existing things as if it were growing from their *own* interior depths." The other is not meant to be forced into the Procrustean bed of a system, but rather unveiled in his freedom through a solicitous love, and thereby set free. As part of this project, Ulrich later develops not only his own logic of the failure of freedom, which leads him into close proximity to psychological and psychiatric issues, as these have been explicated, for example, by Fritz Künkel, Fritz Riemann, Ludwig Binswanger, and Ronald D. Laing;[83] he also opens up paths for the liberation of wounded freedom, as, for example, his heretofore unpublished interpretation of fairy tales shows in an impressive way.[84]

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[83] Fritz Künkel, *Einführung in die Characterkunde*, 17th ed. (Stuttgart: Hirzel, 1982); Fritz Riemann, *Grundformen der Angst: Eine tiefenpsychologische Studie*, 11th ed. (Munich: Ernst Reinhard Verlag, 1976); Ludwig Binswanger, *Schizophrenie* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1957); idem, *Ausgewählte Werke*, vol. 1, *Formen missglückten Daseins*, ed. Max Herzog (Heidelberg: Roland Asanger Verlag, 1992); Ronald D. Laing, *Das geteilte Selbst: Eine existentielle Studie über geistige Gesundheit und Wahnsinn* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1976); idem, *Das Selbst und die Anderen* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1977).

Clearly, the line Ulrich follows in all of this is deeply imbued with theological insights, and it is therefore necessary to clarify the relationship between theology and philosophy, at least in a rudimentary way, as Ulrich formulates it in *Homo Abyssus*. Ulrich emphasizes that "grace cannot but arrive along the 'path of being,'" but also that it is not grace that "constitutes the superessentiality of being as being." Grace does not destroy the ontological difference, but rather reinforces it: "The rupturing of the hypostasis of being, the judgment and death to which God's incarnation condemns this hypostasis, and with it the entire essentiell constitution of Dasein that does 'not yet' unveil being in its ultimate positivity (including the Greek essentialistic metaphysics and the Law of the Old Covenant), does not close the difference, but rather sets it free as perfect and infinitely affirmed in the 'promise of Jesus borne in hope' in the Holy Spirit." For this reason, the revelation of God in Jesus Christ does not at all render philosophy superfluous—no matter how much philosophy must nevertheless transcend itself into theology[85]—instead, revelation liberates philosophy into its most proper activity. Seen in this way, it is also the case that theology, too, "has its speculative measure in the ontological difference." Only where one has given into the temptation of seeing the ontological difference as something that the revelation of God in Jesus Christ is "fundamentally able to close, and to consider, once and for all, as a 'thing-of-the-past,'" insofar as being as being is something that has indeed been measured out wholly by grace, are nature and grace brought to coincide in such a way that the end result is the "absolute system." The philosophy that is caught up in such a system turns into a pseudo-theology, which enables theologians such as Karl Barth to absorb the competencies of such a philosophy into theology.

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[84] [These have since been published as volume 3 of Ulrich's works: *Erzählter Sinn: Philosophische Erfahrungen in der Bilderwelt des Märchens* (Freiburg: Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln, 2000). –Trans.]

[85] "The enactment of being's finitization, which comes to a head in man, is thus recapitulated in Christ, in his obedience to the Father. . . . Philosophy is called by the superessentiality of being to transcend itself into this dimension, for it is this that safeguards its independence to the highest possible degree because of the 'crisis of being' that thus opens up. If philosophy fails to transcend itself in this way, then it falls prey to the hypostasizing of being. It ultimately thus becomes *pseudo-theology*!" HA, A.IX,10.

The Later Writings

What occupies Ulrich in his later writings is essentially the "metaphysics as reenactment," which develops increasingly into a philosophy of vicarious substitution. This philosophy makes clear that the goal of such a metaphysics is not to cancel out the other's thought;[86] instead, it represents the charge given to each of us to carry the burdens of others (Gal 6:2), interpreted even and precisely as a philosophical task. The metaphysics as reenactment, which has its roots in the crisis of being, is the backbone of the later writings. To be sure, these writings do not focus solely on the problem of failed freedom, but also seek in a central way to bring to light the gift character of creation, which the texts elaborate in connection with the theory of evolution,[87] pedagogy,[88] and other themes. Every time Ulrich explores such themes, he never fails to raise the question of how the gift character of creation is related to the failure of human freedom in this particular instance, because the Creator's love comes to its supreme expression in the reconciliation and redemption of fallen freedom. In the resurrection of the Crucified Christ, who atones for man vicariously, God reveals his unsurpassable love for his creature, and this love represents the core of Ulrich's concern, to which we gain access through the following of Christ and by turning our loving attention to our fellow man in his suffering. The metaphysics as reenactment is the existential-philosophical praxis of this loving attention.

The question of a metaphysics as reenactment is one that Ulrich had already taken up prior to *Homo Abyssus*, in an essay titled "The Problem of a 'Metaphysics as Re-Enactment.'"[89] In this essay, he lays out the program for this metaphysics by noting that what he means by "reenactment" [*Wiederholung*, which may also be translated as "retrieval" or "repetition"] in this phrase is the following: "To receive the word of a thinker, and to 'hear it back' into the 'ground' from which it arises and comes to pass (*ereignet*), to follow the path by gathering up the ground, *without* fixing the fact or the ground in place and calculating their distance from each other, and without closing the 'difference.' What is being carried out in this movement is nothing other than human existence. We might therefore describe the task as 'unearthing' the roots of being, though of course without ever being able to objectify or hypostasize, that is, to 'logicize,' being itself in reflection" (267–68). This "unearthing" is possible only if we interpret the word from out of the "open field of play of its super-verbosity," or in other words out of its emergence from superessential being, because it is only thus that we may avoid a "closing of the ontological difference" (273). The open ontological difference, which points to the communication of being as an event of freedom aiming at freedom, prevents the word from becoming futureless (274), and safeguards the uniqueness and historicity of the word (279), which, for all its uniqueness, harbors within itself a healthy "multivalency." In this respect, it corresponds to the wealth of creation (268).

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[86] Cf. on this point Ulrich's book *Atheismus und Menschwerdung*, 2nd ed. (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1975), esp. 45*ff*.

[87] Cf., e.g., "Evolution-Geschichte-Transzendenz," in *Evoluzionismo e storia umana. Atti del XXII. Convegno del Centro di Studi filosofici, Gallarate 1967* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1968).

[88] Cf., e.g., "Padeia-Logos-Europa," in *L'éducation de l'homme européen—Fondements et limites. Actes de la VIIeme Rencontre international, 1962* (Bozen: Institute Internationale d'études européenes, 1963), 173–222.

[89] *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie*, vol. 5/6 (1961/62): 263–98. Cf. 282–83 for the reference to Heidegger.

In his essay "The Philosophical Act as a Critique of Ideology,"[90] Ulrich once again takes up this theme in a thoroughgoing way and offers valuable specifications as he does so. Here, too, he inquires in a *fundamental* way into the possibility of a self-critique in philosophy: "Is it at all possible to discover a 'de-ideologized' beginning of a critique of ideology?" (328). Such a thing is certainly not possible in the sense of a formula from which all ambiguity has been cleared away, for this would bring us back to a hypostasizing of being. Man is disclosed as a *beginning* in being, which "transcends every empirical and historical a posteriori concerning the infinite," and at the same time is handed over to it. In being opened up, man comes to stand before God (329) and is called, through being, to make the decision to receive himself as the beginning (creation as the communication of being). "As the created *gift* and *image* of its absolute origin," being is "simultaneously different from and archetypically identical to the giver." In the unity of completum et simplex, sed non subsistens, the unity of original unity with God and self-outpouring into beings, being is at the same time the unity of wealth and poverty; that is, it is abundance that has been *given away* (329–31). What this means concretely, however—or, in other words, what it means to speak of the "*gift-character* of the beginning" and thereby the ontological difference—becomes accessible only in the free enactment of fruitful reception, which occurs inside of the philosophical act itself: "The completed form of the ontological difference of being from its finite subsistence therefore comes to light in the realm of freedom, which receives its beginning as *response* to the gift of being as love, and at the same time also creatively posits this beginning, albeit through the poverty of its reception" (332). The recipient, by receiving himself as gift, bears witness to the fact that the ontological difference is difference *precisely as a separation between the giver and the gift in the accomplished act of giving*. The gift *remains* archetypically united to the giver *all the way through the separation*. Indeed, it is only *through* his separation from the gift that the giver is able to be genuinely *present* in the gift as a lover.

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[90] "Der philosophische Akt als Ideologiekritik," in *Ideologia e filosofia: Atti del XXI. Convegno internazionale del Centro di studi filosfici, Gallarate 1966* (Brescia: 1967), 328–58.

Because man can never leave the event of the communication of being behind as something finished (which is what the indispensable *conservatio in esse* implies), he remains essentially openness to being and is thus redirected back to this openness in his encounter with his fellow creatures, who also participate in being. The "Thou" may never be sacrificed to "the truth I already know"; instead, the ever greater truth remains "like a space in which alone I am able to encounter the other in an adequate way" (342). The Thou is therefore "one who does not bend to my will, who never becomes completely transparent to me, with whom I am therefore never able to be 'finished'" (343). This openness of finite freedom is what prevents an objectifying calcification of the ontological difference. In this context, Ulrich can also sometimes use the term *Schwebe*—"vacillation" or "suspense"—in a positive sense: The philosophical act "remains in a state of suspense, not in the sense of the logicizing of being in the beginning, but rather in the ontological difference of being as love. It is never able to be objectified subsequently in reflection and taken up into the absolute system. We may not render the philosophical act intelligible and knowable as the absolute measure of all ideology critique. This impossibility is its glory, but also its poverty. The philosophical act remains in a certain sense defenseless, vulnerable to every suspicion of ideology, and, in spite of all this, it is able to 'justify' itself, if at all, only insofar as it allows itself to be liberated into its actually de-ideologized freedom through being's finitization as love" (341).

In the contribution he wrote for the volume *Phänomenologie des Idols* (ed. B. Casper, 1981, 133–269), titled "The Language of Lust and the Temporal Form of the Idol,"[91] Ulrich impressively demonstrates how the "metaphysics as reenactment," as a critique of idolatry, not only distances itself from the idol but also enters into the idol's "no" in order to foster a "yes" that overcomes the idol's alienation *from within* (264). In this text, Ulrich directs his focus to "the always particular quality of the 'between' of the I and the other, which comes to light in the alienated and idolized equivalence, as well as non-alienated equivalence, both theoretically and practically, and thus provides the proper measure." There is "no conceptually fixed criterion" in this relation "by means of which we would be able to establish the difference between the two reflexively." Instead, we must proceed from "the *formal* structural *equivalence* of the originally differing modes of 'unification' and its 'between'" (138).[92] In this realm, it is impossible to establish any unquestionable ground of a presuppositionless beginning that we would be able to take into our grasp and render conceptually transparent. The only true presuppositionlessness is the unconditionality and free willingness of the "for-nothing-ness" (gratis!) of unowed *divine* love, which liberates finite freedom and makes it the beginning in being as love. No philosophical conceptuality is able to substitute for this gratuity in its nonrepeatable, once-and-for-all logos. To "conceptualize" in this context means to break through knowing into the light through the doing of truth: "*truthing* (aletheuein) in love (St. Paul)" (139).[93] This shows that the phenomenology of the idol "always already affirms the liberating Logos of the truth as 'tertius inter nos,' which articulates the objectivity of the phenomenon of the idol in a discerning manner *and* leads it into crisis" (142).[94] What the expression "into crisis" means here is to bring the idols "through a suffering engagement with and against the other (*Aus-einandersetzung*)" "to show themselves for what they are in themselves" and "*at the same time* from within these idols" to carry out "a crisis that 'razes/raises' (*richtende*) them (i.e., both destroys them and takes them up into the living order of love)" (144). This can very well mean that the idols thereby receive a "new transparency to the ever greater truth," "even though, as images, they 'remain' what they *were*" (146–47).[95]

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[91] [This text has been published as "Sprache der Begierde – Götzenzeit – Reine Endlichkeit," in *Logo-Tokos: Der Mensch und das Wort*, vol. 4 of Ulrich's works, ed. Stefan Oster (Freiburg: Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln, 2003), 509–693. –Trans.]

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[92] Regarding the question of the extent to which Ulrich is able to avoid the aporiai that arise from Martin Buber's notion of the "between," see Bieler, *Freiheit*, 217–22.

[93] On Ulrich's notion of the "for-nothing" [*Umsonst*], cf. also "Nietzsche und die atheistische Sinngebung des Sinnlosen" (50*ff.*); *Der Mensch als Anfang* (113–22); *Leben in der Einheit von Leben und Tod*, 104–8.

[94] Cf. also Aelred of Rieval, *On Spiritual Friendship*, 6: "Ecce ego et tu, et spero quod tertius inter nos Christus sit." The notion of God as *tertius inter nos* is a central theme of crucial importance that arises repeatedly in Ulrich's work.

[95] "It could be the case (God alone can distinguish here) that God's true light also falls upon figures

The phenomenology of the idol is a thoroughgoing description of the dialectical "configurations of lust and idol in the conceptualized 'between' of the I and the other" (147). If we no longer recognize God, whether explicitly or implicitly, as the tertius inter nos, and thus no longer recognize the other and indeed one's own freedom as gift, then the healthy structure of the relationship between giver and gift as the giver's generous separation of the gift from himself (which precisely allows him to remain present in the gift) collapses, and so does the receiver's reception of the gift that extends the generosity. In the medium of hypostasized being and a bad material objectivity, the I and the Thou are thus forced to attempt to reproduce the healthy form of finite freedom on their own terms and by way of false absolutizations (idol) and denials (this is the self-made unity of poverty and wealth as false bonicity). This occurs insofar as they vacillate in lust as the perverted desire that exists between fragmented parts that have separated from one another—that is, between isolated ideality and reality and everything they represent—and turn these moments into means of mediation between the I and the other. A structural similarity thus arises between healthy and fragmented freedom, and there is no objective criterion that would allow us to discern the difference between them; instead, they can be judged only "in the spirit" (1 Cor 2).[96] But it also becomes apparent that the form of alienated freedom has to change *as a whole*: "The 'mode of being' of alienated equivalence must therefore die altogether, and indeed through the concrete presence of another, new 'equivalence' lying between those who are alienated from each other. This mode of being is the We-form of being as love in the unity of love's wealth and poverty, the logicized structure of which announced itself as the law of lust" (260–81).

Ulrich attempts to describe the "We-form of being as love" in a number of different works. Especially significant in this regard is his essay "Being and Solidarity."[97] Contrary to Hegel's notion that the beginning is "being = noth-

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of the human imagination (myths) and speculation (philosophies), and that this light can lead through them and their partial truth to the God of revelation." *Glory of the Lord*, vol. 1, *Seeing the Form* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 156.

[96] Wounded freedom becomes apparent in an atmospheric change that the Japanese describe as the displacement and distortion of the *ki*: "If one says that the *ki* is displaced or distorted, what this means is that the atmosphere of naturalness and matter-of-factness, which typically comes to expression in the relation between people that interact with each other does not arise and instead of this an atmosphere that is somehow unnatural and unintelligible prevails." *Bin Kimura, Zwischen Mensch und Mensch: Strukturen japanischer Subjektivität* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995), 129–30. Cf. also Hubertus Tellenbach, *Geschmack und Atmosphäre: Medien menschlichen Elementarkontaktes* (Salzburg: Otto Müller Verlag, 1968).

[97] "Sein und Mitmensch," *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie* 19 (1974): 93–128. The themes Ulrich

ing," as the "most abstract and emptiest definition of the absolute," Ulrich argues for the absolute "simplicity of the unconditional 'for-nothing' (gratis) that characterizes the divine self-communication" (98). This "for-nothing" not only sustains man and world in a primordially abiding way,[98] but it is also the very thing that binds all of us together as human beings: "Item homines non uniuntur inter se, nisi in eo quod est commune inter eos, et hoc est maxime Deus" [for human beings can be united with one another only on the basis of what is common to them, and this, in the highest sense, is God].[99] According to Ulrich, by pointing to being as completum et simplex, sed non subsistens, Thomas "unveils the act that undergirds all liberated intersubjectivity" (120). "Thomas opened up the basic outline of free human interaction in the realm of ontology in a way that will never be surpassed, even if the language in which he expresses it perhaps has become foreign to us who read him today" (123).

Thomas makes it possible to conceive of finite freedom as a gift from God, to such an extent that the gift-character of finite freedom illuminates its *inner* dialogical constitution, which both supports and demands the relationship with one's fellow human beings and thereby transforms man into the "We-form of freedom in its *subject*-mode," "in which the basic outline of the ontological difference of created being as love is symbolized in a personal way" (124):[100]

"*Only there*, where I receive my being in the form of the gift of freedom, only where I exist as given 'to myself' (dative) as an I and thus am in myself an 'I-Thou,' do I exist in myself as an 'other' who has his own being and is not simply at the mercy of freedom because he has been given as a gift—i.e., I exist

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addresses in a concentrated way here receive far more extensive treatment in *Gegenwart der Freiheit* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1974). In this book, Ulrich also presents a theme that occupies him again and again, namely, that of lived time, in a very differentiated manner.

[98] Cf. "Über die spekulative Natur des philosophischen Anfangs," in *Innerlichkeit und Erziehung: In Memoriam Gustav Siewerth*, ed. Franz Pöggeler (Freiburg: Herder, 1964), 27–72; cf. also *Der Mensch als Anfang*.

[99] Thomas Aquinas, *Super secundam epistolam ad Thessalonicenses*, lectura 3,2 (89).

[100] "The ontological difference between 'to be' and 'that which is' exists in man in a personal way as finite subjectivity, without this implying that freedom has the ability to bind being to itself." "Politische Macht-Philosophie-Gnade," 413. "The 'I' becomes an 'I-myself' by receiving its 'self' as a created I, i.e., being an I-Thou already in itself.... The I's relation to itself as I-(Thou), however, avoids slipping into mere ideality insofar as it preserves itself in its relation to the concrete other it encounters and thus rejects the appearance of the Thou of pure concept or consciousness.... It is only in this point that the completed figure of the ontological difference becomes manifest. It consists essentially, not in the difference between 'being and beings' or between the 'I and its object,' but rather in the form of the relation between the I-(Thou) to the Thou-(I) in the We." "Ethos als ontologische Structur der Mitmenschlichkeit," in *Scritti in onore di Carlo Giacon* (Padua: Antenore, 1972), 641–42.

in the form of *my own* self-being, affirmed by the absolute giver. In this case, by virtue of the presence of the absolute Thou who affirms me and is present 'along with me' (as a gift), I am *in myself* an I-Thou-self, *without* losing myself in an I that, on the one hand, floats over above me as a gift that has not been given (hypostasized, pure being) or on the other hand becomes a dead, abstractly fixed, mathematical point. I have to interpret my personal relationship to myself in terms other than that of the universal (genus) and the individual (particular)."[101] None of this implies, however, that I possess the concretely encountered other already in myself a priori, and thereby turn him into a means for my own ends, because the absolute affirmation of the I and Thou by the God who is tertius inter nos allows the "uncloseability of the dialogical difference" to come forth (124), by virtue of which both the I and the Thou remain a mystery to each other. The more the I and the Thou experience themselves as affirmed by the absolute giver and receive themselves and the other in prayer, which is the creature's fundamental act,[102] the more they are able to grow in relation to one another and become fruitful by the other in the poverty that is their very own wealth; indeed, the more they are able to open up together to the one who is *most distant*, in whom the difference of the I-Thou-We from Him, the Wholly-Other, becomes manifest, a difference that we are unable to appropriate to ourselves through any "nostrification" (Karl Barth).[103]

The incomparable quality of the Wholly-Other comes to light in the fact that he enacts the gratuity, the "for-nothing"-ness (*Umsonst* as *gratis*), of his love in the futility, the "for-nothing"-ness (*Umsonst* as *frustra*), of the cross, by dying for us as God made man. The sharpness of this for-nothing-ness (*frustra*) in the crucifixion is something Ulrich describes over and over again, perhaps in the most concentrated place in his book *Leben in der Einheit von Leben und Tod*. In this book, Ulrich presents the fundamental form of finite freedom in its simplicity in an especially accessible way. He characterizes the fundamental form of finite freedom as the simultaneous archetypical unity of giver and gift and separation of the giver from the gift, whereby "separation" is associated with "death" ("Separation always implies death," 15; cf. 70*ff.*), while the archetypical unity of giver and gift represents "life." Because archetypical unity and separation are one in the enactment of freedom as love, realized freedom ought to be characterized as "living in the unity of life and death." But how are we to understand this unity?

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[101] Cf. on this point Ulrich's interpretation of the self in S. Kierkegaard: "Fragwürdigkeit des Menschen und Gottesfrage bei Marx, Nietzsche und Kierkegaard," 269*ff.*, and *Gegenwart der Freiheit*, 92–98.

[102] See Ulrich, *Gebet als geschöpflicher Grundakt*.

[103] [By "Nostrifikation," Barth means the reduction of God to our own possession. –Trans.] "How do the I and Thou become free for each other and for themselves? By becoming inwardly aware with and through each other of the unshakeable ground of their existence. How do they become a light for each other? By both of them accepting the naked night of their needy poverty as the condition of possibility of their becoming a self, a condition that has sprung from the light of love and that is nevertheless presupposed as really distinct from it, as a necessity, without which they would not illuminate one another and would not be able to be-there for one another." *Atheismus und Menschwerdung*, 15.

"If 'everything actual effects something similar to itself,' it means that the life of being is a 'likeness' of the God who creates and effects. For the more profoundly and originally a gift comes from the heart, or in other words the more it arises from the interiority of the one who gives, the more purely the form of the giver comes to expression in it, the more the origin of the gift is present in it, the more interior is the 'archetypical unity' of giver and gift. To see a gift as given by one who communicates therein his very own life is to see the origin present in the gift. As image of the giver, the gift becomes 'transparent' to him in its tiniest details." This, however, presupposes that the gift is truly given freely, "for-nothing" (*Umsonst* as *gratis*), for only in this case can it arise truly from the *innermost being* of the giver (70).

A second point follows immediately from this: "The gift would not correspond to the giver's intentions, on the other hand ... if it remained trapped inside the archetypical unity with the giver, if it sought to preserve the wealth of its original life, as an 'intact whole' with the undulating sea of its 'infinite possibilities,' from the mortal poverty [*Todesarmut*] of kenosis, from the finitization and the separation from the origin, a separation that implies death [*Todestrennung*]. The umbilical cord has to be cut in order for the blood of the one who receives the gift to be able to circulate on its own—in order that he be able to stand on his own two feet, in order that he be able to stand upright and affirm himself, to walk his own path, in order that he be given the power and the freedom to utter the 'yes' of being that has been given to him. If he were to remain simply attached to the origin and were not exposed to the defenselessness and neediness unto death [*Todesnot*] of birth, he would be stillborn, a withered corpse.... No, we may not shield ourselves from the death of separation, for it is an intrinsic and essential part of the unity of love between the giver and his gift" (71–72).[104]

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[104] Ulrich's vision of the death and separation implied in giving, which also stands in dialogue with Hegel and Feuerbach (*Leben*, 32, 46, 73), is also similar to what Balthasar expounds in his *Theodrama*: "God the Father can give his divinity away in such a manner that it is not merely 'lent' to the Son: the Son's possession of it is 'equally substantial.' This implies such an incomprehensible and unique 'separation'

Now, it is possible to misinterpret what Ulrich says about the "mortal separation" (in which all *crisis*, as "parting," has its roots!) precisely as a tragic worldview, as a glorification of death, which is vulnerable to the strong suspicion of ideology. But Ulrich seeks in this book to illuminate the indispensable distinction between "death" as a necessary moment of love and the life-denying death as the wages of sin (Rom 6:23). Whenever man is not prepared to lose his life for Christ's sake (Mk 8:35), he will inevitably produce his own death in the form of a "fabricated horror," in order to liquefy the life that clings to itself, the life that suffocates in boredom (20*ff.*). The alienated forms of death are forms of despair, whose death, according to Kierkegaard, consists in precisely *not* dying, not being able to grow beyond oneself.[105] By contrast, the loving death of self-communication consists in true *self-affirmation*. Whoever gives in truth separates himself from the gift *precisely insofar* as he affirms himself, because it is only thus that he is able to affirm the other by means of his gift: the self-affirmation of the giver that passes into the gift, which is an expression of its origin, becomes interchangeable with the affirmation of the recipient. It does so because the gift can be good for this later only if it bears the power of affirmation within itself, a power that stems from the affirmation of its origin, who affirms himself *precisely insofar* as he empties himself to the other unreservedly, without ulterior motive, without bending back upon himself (*curvatus in se*): "The one who truly gives, i.e., loves, is not concerned about himself, about his I = I; instead, he is concerned about enriching and increasing the endowed Thou, the recipient; he is concerned about the other's liberated fruitfulness and self-transcendence. But it is precisely in this that the 'yes' to myself is manifest, the 'yes' to my own productivity: for only what is truly given away, what comes to rest in the Thou, what becomes his very own, bears witness to the fact that it comes *from* me, it is the fruit of my life, it is 'one' with me archetypically. The one who gives discovers his essence in the other through the separation from himself. He gains himself in his 'yes' to the Thou" (72). Liberated being-oneself and loving being-for-another [*liebendes Hinsein zum Anderen*] may therefore not be separated from each other. Each is possible *only in coincidence with the other*.[106] The unity of both is not some-

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of God from himself that it *includes* and grounds every other separation—be it never so dark and bitter." *Theodrama*, 4:325. Cf. *Theodrama*, vol. 5, *The Last Act* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 84–85, 245–46.

[105] Kierkegaard, *Sickness unto Death*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 18.

[106] *Der Mensch als Anfang*, 47–111; *Gegenwart der Freiheit*, 13, 196, 207.

thing we are able to construct (and indeed not something we can prescribe [3–4, 99–100]), but is instead only something we are able to receive. Specifically, we receive it from the generative model of the unity of being-oneself and being-with-another: the Trinitarian God (122*ff.*), who is able to take our side to such an extent "that we are able to take *his* side and thereby take the side of *all others*—beyond the 'I' = want" (36). This reception, this receiving of oneself as a gift in humility with respect to absolute love (21), is death in its proper sense, the death that is demanded of us.[107] This simple truth lies at heart of all of Ulrich's work; everything else he says follows from it.

To be sure, however, this simple truth immediately places an impossible demand on us, so that we have need of special assistance from God in order truly to be able to bring our act of freedom to its proper completion. Ulrich underscores the fact that one is able to lose his life *only for the sake of Christ* (132), since he takes our side (134) in *such a way* that he bears our weakenss and failures and becomes a curse for us (Gal 3:13): "He is declared 'dispensable,' 'useless,' 'unserviceable.'… And he takes this being-cast-aside, this declaration of his uselessness and futility, upon himself; inside of the 'for-nothing' character of the flesh ('*Umsonst*' as *vanité*) he opens up the 'for-nothing' character of love ('*Umsonst*' as *gratuité*). The pierced heart gives everything. In the midst of futility, it does not fall back on itself in resignation, it does not say: 'it is all in vain.' Instead, it 'walks' the path through hell and towards the Father, indeed, even passing through and leaving behind the '*one*' death: in the no-way-out of the underworld.… The Son's total self-gift to the one from whom he has eternally proceeded, the revelation of his never 'concluded' (= discontinued) return home to the Father, in the very midst of the hell of lovelessness (= abandonment by God), is the mortal poverty of the life of love: the death of death. The formless one, in whom there is neither shape nor beauty: He is the glory of the Father in *truth* and in *deed*" (135–36).

The way in which this death is meant to benefit us is clearly explained in the unpublished work "Death in Knowledge and Love" (Regensburg lecture "Life in Contemplation of Death," from the winter semester 1978/79).[108] This work brings Ulrich's philosophy of vicarious representation to its culmination. Proceeding from the phenomenon of knowledge, Ulrich explains knowing as a liberating substitution, by which one takes the other's place: "The one who knows enters thought-fully into his 'object' ['*Sache*'] (whether it be the other or the self) in such a way that he under-stands, and so endures, the thing known from the inside, in its most intimate and proper interiority. In the 'yes' of this affirmation, the knower *bears* the measure of the thing's self-being (the particular mode of its ground-in-itself, its subsistence) and thus comes to under-stand it. In the act by which he thus takes the place of the other, the knower brings his other to completion in such a way that he himself *can*, i.e., becomes capable of, the existence and ability-to-be of the known other" (158–59).[109] The knower "can" ["*vermag*"] the other because he "loves" ["*mag*"] him: "I *can* you, because in knowing I under-stand your life and help you to carry it, I enact your destiny as my own in the solidarity of knowing unity with you, without anticipating, in an a priori and ego-istic way, the bringing forth [*Zeitigung*] of your life, with which you (and you alone) have been entrusted" (159). This knowing is a deed (action), in which "I at the same time suffer you (passion) as the form that gives measure to my life" (159). The knower assumes "the entire weight of the one known in the very act of knowing," in such a way that "he bears, suffers, and brings to term [*trägt, erträgt und austrägt*] the other's burden" (163). It can therefore be said that "in every original act of knowing" the knower dies in passing beyond himself: "for he takes an 'other' life as the form of his own self-enactment" (176). But this death is at the same time the begetting of, and giving birth to, the other: "knowing carries out an act of begetting and giving birth, insofar as the one that is known is at the same time creatively actualized [*getan*] and received, carried to term 'in good hope,' and borne in suffering" (168). This presupposes that knowing is bound up with loving, or, to put it in Thomistic language, that it is a *cognitio per connaturalitatem*, which is sustained by love. This act transforms the lover into the beloved[110] and at the same time reciprocally changes the other by virtue of the loving attention the knower shows him. In this case, knowing is more than the registration of a fixed fact. It is the perception of a living reality in the future of its ability to be, which it possesses as a gift. When the other has turned away from God and his fellow human beings, this knowing can be enacted only as a painful event. The transformative power of such a knowing love[111] is something we find in the highest and *primary* sense in the Cross of Christ, who has wholly taken our place through vicarious substitution. Through faith in him, we acquire a share in this power and become able, for our part, to take the place of all others, while we—as those who have always already been taken up into the circle of life—at the same time are borne by others: We believe only in and with the Church, who is not at all an anonymous collective, but the spiritually effected living configuration of personal missions. From this results Ulrich's interest in the "social form of truth," which comes to expression again and again in his writing.[112]

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[107] Cf. *Gebet als geschöpflicher Grundakt*, 78ff.

[108] ["Der Tod in Erkenntnis und Liebe" has since been published in *Leben in der Einheit*, 147–227. –Trans.]

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[109] In explaining this claim, Ulrich points to the cognate affinity of *kennen* and *können* [which is reflected to some extent in the English cognates, "ken," "know," and "can" –Trans.], "Der Tod in Erkenntnis und Liebe," 160–61n10. He thus draws a parallel (which is justified not only etymologically but also on the basis of the matter itself) between "to know" and "to can" (or perhaps: to know a thing so as to bring a thing into one's ken, or to en-able it).

[110] On this point, see Bieler, "Befreiung der Freiheit," 387–407.

It is astonishing how consistently Ulrich is able to open up the core of a problem, and to identify the center of a matter—on the basis of the One Thing Necessary. But at the same time he is a master of differentiation, who constantly discovers new aspects and introduces surprising points of view. This abundance is something we have only been able to hint at here. Ulrich's writings contain an immense wealth of various themes—including some drawn directly from Scripture—which he illuminates in a way that shows how important philosophical reflection is for theology. To investigate this more precisely would provide the material for more than one dissertation. If the Church and her theology do not wish to slide more and more into a ghetto existence, it is urgent that they take up the sorts of insights that one finds in Ulrich.[113]

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[111] Cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Does Jesus Know Us? Do We Know Him?* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999).

[112] "Der Soziologismus und die soziale Gestalt der Wahrheit," in *Sociologisme et Vérité: L'authentique socialité de l'Occident. Table Ronde 3.-5.11 (1967)* (Bozen: Institut international d'Etudes européennes, 1975), 45–122.

[113] [Bieler's original *Einleitung* ended with some examples of the kinds of dialogues Ulrich's philosophy could fruitfully open up: with the social and natural sciences, and in a particular way with Buddhism. But these two pages have been left out of this translation because they are not as relevant in the English-language context. –Trans.]

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Homo Abyssus

PREFACE

The present work contains, essentially unchanged, the main part of my Salzburg habilitation, "An Attempt at a Speculative Unfolding of Man's Essence in his Participation in Being" (1958).

In this work, I sought to show that being [i.e., "to be," *Sein*] and man belong together in a primordial way and that, inside of this relation, being reveals its *superessentiality* to man even and precisely with respect to man's *essence*.

Man has taken just this theme of the superessential "crisis of being" as his own; it represents his original task. Man is the concretely subsisting grateful reception of being in person, the guiding pattern [*die Richte*] and the fundamental form of the ontological difference of being from that which is [*Sein und Seiende*] and the subject of participation in being that God most ultimately intended.

L.-B. Geiger interpreted this notion in the following way in his book *Participation in the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*: "One must respond, in our opinion, that every aspect of the theory of participation is founded on an awareness of our human nature, which is at once spiritual and corporeal."[1]

The subject matter itself has transcended ontology into anthropology, and anthropology into Christology—and I have followed in the wake of this movement.

I am well aware that such an undertaking might immediately provoke resistance and misunderstanding. This is true above all today, when the simple question of being has once again enabled thought to bethink itself out of its centuries-old imprisonment in pseudo-theologumena and return to its proper path, to spring into operation from a more profound experience of hope—that is, the "not yet" of the ontological difference between being and beings—which we are never permitted to close.

The *logicizing* of the Spirit of God, the reflexive subsumption of the *eschaton* into an incarnation of the Logos that has been made a "thing of the past," a "has-been" ["*gewesenen*"], has seduced thought into substantializing the "to be" in the posited *res* or the essence and has thereby subjected reason, which is *capax entis*, to the dominion of an unrestrained *ratio*. The essentialization of being draws its force from the theologumenon of grace that has been reduced to the level of nature [*mit der Natur zur Deckung gebracht*] and is thus unable to engage with that nature in history.

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[1] L.-B. Geiger, La *participation dans la Philosophie de S. Thomas d'Aquin*, 2nd ed. (Paris: J. Vrin, 1953), 453.

We are slowly beginning to free ourselves today from this gnostic identification of nature and grace, insofar as we are beginning to ask the question of being as being in a plain and simple way. But to the extent that the "not yet" dimension of the ontological difference between being and beings opens up in this inquiry, grace renews its play with nature, and it does so precisely on the basis of the "past" incarnation of the Word of God. When the question of being comes out into the open, nature is set free for a new encounter with grace. Such an encounter occurs whenever we open ourselves in a thoughtful way to being as being, even if our doing so makes us look like "blind heathens" who turn our backs to supernatural revelation.

Thoughtful inquiry into being as being does not occur in opposition to the Holy Spirit's revelation in the Logos, but is instead in the deepest sense made possible by that revelation. Dis-covering the reduction [*Die ent-deckte Deckung*] of grace to nature frees up space for the speculative experience of the ontological difference. At the same time, however, it indicates a new *temptation*, namely, to sacrifice the "having been" of the incarnation to the future of the "godly god" (Heidegger) who is ever yet to come—or, understood within the framework of the ontological difference, to hypostasize being *in opposition to* its concrete mediation into subsistence, which has always already occurred in the past [*je schon ge-wesene*], "through" the essence [*das Wesen*], and thus to transform being into something that is always just arriving.

This speculative a priori entails in turn a new substantializing of being. The only possibility that it allows is the myth of being [*der Seinsmythos*]; for what the myth recounts never becomes factually concrete anywhere, because in every instance it occurs as "a thing of the past" [*das "Gewesene"*]. Thus, when we absolutize historicity in the sense of the ad-vent of being that always sends itself in every moment [*sich je und je zuschickenden Zu-kunft des Seins*], then there is little to keep us from falling into a total dissolution of genuine historicity.

The speculative a priori of the being that is apprehended anew at every moment harbors in itself, of course, the opportunity for a genuine experience of man's dependence on the concrete world of existing reality, in which he is always already involved and which stands as the point of departure for his return to himself, a point that can *never be recuperated* into reflexive thought. This experience of being in the world at the disposal of the "advent of being" that needs to be actualized in thought at every moment, however, dissolves if it is not grasped on the basis of God's positivity, next to which being cannot hold itself in suspension in order subsequently to "hand itself over" as hypostasized being to the existing thing [*dem Seienden*]. Indeed, to the extent that being is hypostasized, it becomes utterly incapable of surrendering itself, since the hypostasis thus negates the fissure [*Durchriß*] that passes through the ontological difference; in this way, being has already anticipated its mediation to concrete subsistence in an ideality that claims absolute validity.

We thus see the sort of temptations to mythos we face when we pose the question of being. And even the ever historical "self-sending" of being does not help us to break through the spell of mythic senescence. We do not overcome the immobilizing of being in univocal, static essence by "transposing" our philosophizing, whether it be into an Old Testament attitude of expectant waiting or into the "not yet" of Greek metaphysics.

This is the critical situation in which philosophizing finds itself today. If we thus mark out our claims within the context of supernatural revelation, it is *not* in order to advocate a pseudo-theological transformation of metaphysics, but rather in order to allow philosophy to stand freely on its own on the ground of being as being. In other words, the point is precisely to remove the veil from the theologumena that pervade modern metaphysics; for these theologumena have led to the effacement of the superessential thinking of being, a process that comes to completion in Hegel. Our work therefore stands in dialogue with modern metaphysics, especially with Hegel.

It is therefore a purely *metaphysical* concern that drives us to transcend philosophy in the direction of supernatural revelation, since the liberation of thought onto its proper path by being as being is opened up in the "not yet" of grace's relationship with nature, precisely in light of the "fullness of time" that is present in its "pastness" [*in ihren "Gewesenheit"*].

Reason's ascent from the existing entity into being is stirred up anew at every moment by the event of nature's readying itself for grace, a readiness that does not get absorbed in the absolutized incarnation of the divine Logos—that is, in grace's coming out to meet nature—to assume it, and thus to transform it, which is taken to be an event that belongs definitively to the past. The way reason ascends to being from the entity is similar to the way in which being "results from the principles of essence" (Thomas) but precisely therein unveils its superessentiality.

Two consequences have followed from the essentializing of being into a *res*, which theology itself made possible: on the one hand, an immanentizing of the "Lord's" parousia, which was enabled by the closing of the ontological difference that occurs above all in the final two chapters of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and, on the other hand, the identification of being as being with the concrete existent as the "earthly paradise" of a *visio beatifica* of the finite that has already been mediated into its absolute ground, whereby even God has been depotentiated and so turned into a slave of the anti-godly dominion of the absolute contradiction of hypostasizing being as a thing "juxtaposed to" God.

Because there is such great enthusiasm today for the liberation of thought that has been achieved by the discovery of being as being, this work will not be spared the objection of unjustified theologizing. It will no doubt above all provoke the distrust of those with an aversion to anything theological—an aversion that never fully disappears. But I think of myself as wholly on the side of those who raise their objection for the reason given above. Perhaps these thinkers' efforts will stand out even more clearly in the light of what we are able to bring to expression here, since we are reflecting on the grounds for their concern.

This work owes many debts of gratitude, above all to the thought of Thomas Aquinas.

According to Aquinas, "one does not philosophize in order to know what people have meant, but rather to know what the truth of things is" (*In de caelo et mundo*, 1.1.10), and in the *Summa theologiae* we read, "For to know what you may will, or what you may understand, does not belong to the perfection of my intellect; but only to know the truth in reality" (*ST* 1.107.2).

For this reason, I have sought to conduct this discussion by adhering to the *subject matter* itself, to make use of error in order to clarify the truth, and in doing so also to be genuinely grateful to those who have erred (cf. *Meta.* 2.1).

It is, after all, precisely in the trouble [*Unwesen*] and the guilt of the error that the ever greater measure of truth and love reveals itself, the truth and love that in fact made the error possible in the first place: "Nothing conquers except truth, and the victory of truth is love" (Augustine, Sermon 358). To deny this would be false humility!

If certain aspects of this work pass beyond the boundaries of familiar terrain, that is because we are *in via*; the pilgrim finds himself not seldom alone in strange surroundings.

The thoughts here have ripened in contemplation. They retain the imprint of their origin and therefore require the reader to retrace this contemplative path himself, retrieving its thoughts as he circles through it. May the reader take this as a gentle request rather than as an imposition.

The more originally the truth comes to expression, the more profoundly it takes the thinker into the tribunal of silence, in which the word has its roots, in which it is cradled and wishes to be carried gratefully to term. This is just what I have been given to experience as I traveled the path—a path that I can look back over now that I stand at the "end," which always remains a new beginning. Such an experience requires us to be still and open our ears [*Auf-hören*], and grants us in this quiet listening the hope of a riper saying of the truth.

The basic ideas in this work were presented for the first time in a lecture given in the course of the third workshop on the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas in October 1956 in the Albertus-Magnus-Akademie of the German Dominicans (Walberberg bei Cologne).

What was presented there, and now here, needed to ripen. The following larger investigations preceded the present study: "Being and Essence" (1954), a work in which I attempted to develop an "anthropological ontology"; and an "Attempt at the Speculative Unfolding of a Primordial and Fundamental Anthropology," which was an engagement with the work of Anton Günther. My dissertation (Munich, 1955)—in which I sought to interpret the notion of matter in Francisco Suarez, Duns Scotus, and Aquinas on the basis of the specific experience of being in each of these thinkers and to bring them into dialogue with one another—also travels a certain distance along this same path.

In the Second Letter to the Corinthians (10:3–6), Paul says that, though, as wayfarers, we remain in the flesh, we do not wage war on the flesh's terms.

The "flesh" substantializes being and erects the hypostasis of being next to God: it refuses to acknowledge that being is self-giving love; it desires to circumscribe self-withholding being in the mind, and, by means of human power, to expose the most intimate interiority of being as love through the magic of the "absolute concept." The "flesh" wants to subordinate everything to the "absolute system." It assaults; it consumes; it does not let be. Not infrequently, this very pathos of a refusal to let be celebrates its "consummation" ["*Hochzeiten*"] in philosophical thought. It feels itself empowered to close the ontological difference on the basis of a pseudo-speculative a priori of the "fullness of time." It presumes itself capable of absolute deduction. Thinking constantly runs into the danger of lapsing into a false reduction of grace to nature and *precisely thereby* presenting itself as "per-ennial." In the aforementioned passage of his letter to the Corinthians, Paul overcame thought's entrapment [*Benommenheit*] by pseudo-theologumena in the following sentence: "We take every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." *This* captivity of thought to the obedience of Christ, however, is the ultimate seal of the freedom it achieves by virtue of being as being: "The Lord, however, is Spirit; but wherever the Spirit of the Lord is found, there is freedom" (2 Cor 3:17–18).

Regensburg, Easter 1961

A

To Be and the Being of Beings

I

The *Operatio* of Speculative Thought as an Ontological Enactment of Hope

1. Being and the Movement of Thought

Thomas Aquinas says at one point: "Our knowledge is so weak that no philosopher will ever be able to investigate perfectly the nature of a single fly."[1] If this is true, what business do we have trying to say something about the being of beings, or to predicate anything of it? To be sure, the scientist knows quite a bit about what a fly is, but no matter how deeply he may penetrate intellectually [*hinein-lesen*] into this organism, no matter how long he gathers together [*zusammenlesen*] the many-faceted things he has uncovered in his investigation, he will not be able to bring its inner being to light [*auslesen*]; for "physis (nature) loves to be hidden" (Heraclitus).

How much more, then, does being itself lie hidden, that by virtue of which we call all existing things "beings," and from which therefore even the nature of the tiny fly stems, to say nothing of our knowledge of it? How can we ever hope to get to the bottom of being or even form some conception of it? We are therefore able to raise a question right from the start: Is it at all possible to discover a path for thought that, so long as we remained faithful to it, would allow us eventually to reach a point at which being would stand bare to the eyes of reason? Is it possible for us to follow along the path, running[2] from one being to another, in the hope of discovering, at the end of all our journeying, the very thing that initially started us off on the path? Where does this path begin? Do we not run the risk of ending up in a dead end [*im Unwegsam*] and abandoning ourselves, dumbstruck, to an irrational speechlessness?

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[1] Thomas, *In symb. apost.*, 1.

[2] Cf. *De ver.* 15.1.

Once we have started down the path, however, we nevertheless get closer to the goal with every step, for this "goal" is "to be," and "nothing can be added to being that would be external to it, since nothing is extraneous to it except non-being, which can be neither form nor matter."[3] It is not possible to take even a single step outside of being—for it would be a step into nonbeing. We are therefore always already embraced on all sides by being, although at the same time, being releases us into a state of poverty [*die Not*] and into the ever incalculable temporal risk of making the journey. We never find a place to stand outside of this movement toward being as being as if we were starting from inside the "element of nothingness," even though the "goal" itself seems to demand something like this. Being can be "aimed at" ["*angezielt*"], if reason "empties itself" and becomes dispossessed [*entworden*] of the manifest wealth of tangible beings.

The fact that, in our thought-full advance toward being, we never come to the point of being brutally "abandoned" out somewhere beyond being means that reason knows being "on the basis of its essence," *naturaliter*.[4] What orients thought in its operation is "to be," which is that in relation to which everything is questioningly penetrated and resolved.[5] We begin as "always-already-having-been-involved-thinkingly-with-being" and are easily inclined to fall to the temptation of believing that we already have the work of the path behind us insofar as the being that we have always already "possessed" makes our journey superfluous. Once we have reached the goal, haven't we thus left the path behind us, made it a thing of the past?

But "to be" is not the final destination of thinking in the sense that we would either have to be impotent pilgrims, always *tragically* remote from it, or else we would be forced to take a blind leap, transporting ourselves into its uncircumscribable ideality in a will-to-"pure beginning." Instead, being preserves a difference within itself, the liberating difference of the goal from the progress of thinking among the multiplicity of beings. This difference places us in the not yet of hope, which pervades the innermost region of speculative thought as its vital element.

The understanding [*Verstand*], which *merely* distinguishes and separates along precise boundaries [*unter-scheidende und ab-scheidende (prae-cisie-*

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[3] *De pot.* 7.2.9.

[4] *SCG* 2.83; likewise, *De ver.* 11.1.3: "The ratio of to-be itself cannot be unknown to us."

[5] "The ultimate terminus of the resolution is the consideration of being." *In de Trinit.*, 6.13 (= q.6.1.C022).

rende)], and therefore fixes things in themselves, destroys the element of hope that belongs to the speculative act of reason [*Vernunft*], insofar as it traps us either in the "always-already-having-been-in-being," allowing every "ad-vent of being" that comes to pass [*sich ereignende*] to be submerged in the "has-been," making it a thing of the past and thus "aging" it as something without a future—or else it abandons us, frozen, on the path, driving us toward an advent of being that remains within itself and never gives itself away, a future that throws us back upon the fruitless beginning.[6] What thus becomes apparent on the basis of the ontological difference that is opened up by being itself is that what we find around us is not strictly speaking to be, but is rather the various things that are: we move "in" being insofar as we are *in via* among the multiplicity of existing things.

But we wanted to reach being as being! Wasn't our goal the point at which being as being is "granted" [*es "gibt"*]? Is it that there is in the end no such thing as this dimension of to be as such for itself? Has being always already been "given" to us *in* and *through* beings? Have we not always already apprehended "to be" in beings insofar as we penetrate them with our minds [*in ihnen lesen*], since in fact all the *intelligere* (understanding) of reason is an *intus-legere* (a reading-from-within)?

Yes, we have always already apprehended to be; for "what the mind first conceives and as it were knows best, and into which it resolves all of its conceptions, is esse."[7] Therefore we are always already at the "goal."

But the question that first set us in motion arises once again: Doesn't this eliminate all movement toward the goal? Haven't we fallen into impotence in this endeavor insofar as we are utterly unable to bring being as being to expression in an adequate word? Are we not exiled as in some sense "always-already-having-arrived-at-the-goal" in an essentialized past that prevents us from making any progress?

Isn't our plan in the truest sense of the word "without prospects"? Doesn't it force us simply to renounce the path toward being as being and content ourselves with what we find lying before us, the various things in which we are always already involved and often "entangled"? Wouldn't we rather satisfy ourselves with our always already familiar, tried and true, "catalogued" [*"verbuchten"*] world? Don't we reach being as being soonest when we plant ourselves on the solid earth of everyday occupations and facts?

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[6] The true ontological difference, which thinking attains in the element of hope, overcomes the impatience of the understanding that fixes things and so tears them apart in favor of the "humble patience" of the creature that accepts itself. Thus relationship comes about through distance, and both are redeemed in the "patience that hopes." In this patience, thought is placed outside of the "essentialized past" and of the "advent" that never conveys itself, and it is set in the now of "being-there." "Countering the 'impatience' of these rending absolutizations, there is the 'patience' of *standing within the genuinely creaturely interval between* creaturely essence and creaturely existence." Erich Przywara, "Philosophies of Essence and Existence," in *Analogia Entis: Metaphysics: Original Structure and Universal Rhythm*, trans. John R. Betz and David Bentley Hart (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 344.

[7] *De ver.* 1.1. It will later become clear why we translate *ens* here as esse, "to be."

Or is there such a thing as a movement toward being as being, which as such is radical movement and yet nevertheless, precisely because it is movement, always already has its path behind it and thus stands at the goal? In this case, there would be a movement of thought that, according to the whole of its act, has always already entrusted itself to the origin and goal and, as a movement that thus comes under the sway of the mystery of to be, is released onto the path.

2. "Circling Thought"

There is indeed a kind of thinking that moves itself in just this way! It is circling thought, which is always already gathered up *in via* and precisely as it pursues this path, and has always already arrived at the goal in the center of the circle, a center that has always already unified in advance every step, every progression from one point to the other.

Circling thought precedes itself in its movement: "Circular motion is the most perfect ... because it connects the end with the beginning."[8] In this case, to be would be the center of circling thought, a center that as such is never "possessed," except in the course of progress among the multiplicity of beings—just as the forward movement of this thinking is never absolutized and forced into a single, rational track that leads into the void, but is rather "sublated" in the center as its origin and goal. The radius of this circle, however, is the ontological difference, and hope holds sway as its element. Thinking enters in hope onto the path and is admitted, from its relationship to the center, into the "site" of its existence, a site that occurs as an event in every moment [*je und je sich ereignenden "Ort"*]; thinking is thus determined by the fullness of this origin.

But at this point a new question arises: If the ontological difference is the circle's radius, can't it be determined in a "linear" way and reflexively recuperated in concepts according to thought's geometric position in the revolution of the circumference? No!

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[8] *Met.* 1.1–5; cf. also *De ver.* 8.15.3; likewise, *ST* 2–2.180.6.2: The "circular movement of the loving spirit" revolves "ceaselessly without beginning and end just like the movement of a circle."

If reason were able to measure the radius of the difference, then the hope, the not yet, the risk of the progress *in via*, would be eliminated; all of this would be made a thing of the past, turned into "absolute knowledge"; the linear "*discursus* from one thing to another" (see *De ver.* 15.1) would be bound back to a fixed center of the circle and thus calculated.

We must therefore weigh the threefold mode of "sublation," which circling thought experiences inside the ontological difference.

Thought is "suspended" because it is *itself taken as movement* in the unmoving center and thus is in a certain sense canceled as movement—but not for all that absolutely eliminated; instead, it is precisely thereby "sublated" in the sense of being preserved and therefore once again released, let be, not repressed in the preservation, but rather energized, actuated, made more "authentic" as movement, which means "elevated" to itself.

In this movement of thought, *cogitatio* as *co-agitatio* remains entirely what it is: in its externalization, it is a sensuous intuition of the diversity and multiplicity of the appearance of things, "in this intuition, by re-collecting itself and therefore returning to itself, it stretches out toward the one, simple truth."[9] It is at the same time *co-agitatio* as the understanding that both separates and connects in the *colligere* as *intus-legere*, which guides the *discursus*. What belongs together in the *colligere* are the "perceptions of the senses, the in-formed images (*ein-gebildeten Bilder*), and the *discursus* of *ratio*."[10]

But this progress in multiplicity is gathered up in circling thought in the simple gaze, the "*intuitus* of reason."[11] All seeking has always already come to rest in it as in its origin and end.[12] The mode that particularly characterizes circling thought becomes manifest in this. It is original meditation: "meditatio ...

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[9] Cf. *ST* 2–2.180.3.

[10] *ST* 2–2.180.3.

[11] Cf. *De ver.* 15.1.

[12] *ST* 1.79.8; *De ver.* 15.1. The movement of thought, which we previously interpreted in the vertical dimension of the ontological difference, now shows itself in the horizontal dimension as the embodied spirit's act of knowing: in the self-emptying turn outward into the world by way of the senses and in the self-collecting return of the spirit to itself. The innermost interiority of the spirit and the outermost externality of sensuality do not allow themselves to be bound together and calculated in a "linear" fashion as two points connected by a straight line any more than the difference of being from the multiplicity of beings can be fixed as a "linear radius." It already becomes apparent that the circular movement will have to be understood in a certain sense more profoundly. It will not allow itself to be fixed as the center of a circle, but will break open the "linearality" of the radius.

is the spirit's intuition (*intuitus animi*)." But it is this intuition only in the finite structure of its status as viator—"while occupied in searching for the truth."[13]

Reason's *intus-legere* (reading-in) interprets itself (*auslegen*—literally, "lays itself out"), however, in the "play" of circling thought in a variety of ways that correspond to the ever varying dimensions of existence, in which reason thought-fully gathers itself. It plays because it enjoys a self-sufficiency in its movement. But reality is differentiated into a variety of kinds "that are hidden within, to find which human knowledge has to penetrate within so to speak."[14] "Intellective knowledge, however, penetrates into the very essence of a thing,"[15] for intelligere means the ability to read inside of the essence of the being: "for intelligere (to understand) is the same as *intus-legere* (to read the inside)."[16] Thus, the intus-legere of reason must also come into play in different ways in relation to the various sorts of givenness, in which the ever hidden depths of the essence and esse of the reality themselves come into play.

Thus "Under the accidents lies hidden the substantial nature of reality, under words lies hidden their meaning (*significata verborum*),"[17] though every correctly perceived and spoken word is transparent to this meaning: "For the word has more agreement in its essence with the reality that is expressed in the word than with the one who speaks it, even though the word rests in the speaker as the one who bears it."[18] For, further on, it is said that "The truth lies hidden under the likenesses and figures that signify it (because the intelligible world is enclosed within as compared with the sensible world, which is perceived externally), and *effects lie hidden in their causes, and vice versa*."[19] This *et e converso* [and vice versa] is worth noting because it says that the accidents, too, in which the essence of things affirms itself in a productive and expressive way, have a sort of concealment within the substantial nature of the thing, just as words have a concealment within that which they express; it means, moreover, that images are latent within the essence of things, that therefore the *exterius* has an *interius*, that the effects are veiled within the causes and are identical to them in an "archetypical" way.

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[13] *ST* 2–2.180.3; cf. *ST* 2–2.2.1: "Cogitation is, properly speaking, the movement of the mind while yet deliberating, and not yet [the not yet of hope!] perfected by the clear sight of truth."

[14] *ST* 2–2.8.1.

[15] *ST* 2–2.8.1.

[16] *ST* 2–2.8.1.

[17] *ST* 2–2.8.1.

[18] *De nat. verbi intellectus*, 1. [Recent scholarship has come to the consensus that this text was not written by Aquinas, but most likely Thomas de Sutton. –Trans.]

[19] *ST* 2–2.8.1.

The interiority of the thing that reveals and signifies itself is unveiled in the exteriority in such a way that becoming manifest is precisely a mode of remaining hidden, that is, a return into the interiority that is proper to the ground. The ground is able to bloom forth [*herauf-gehen*] in a manifest and effective manner only on the basis of this internalized re-collection. But Thomas continues: "Hence we may speak of understanding (*intellectus*) with regard to all these things."[20] It is within these differences between the "exterius and interius," in which the original difference of being in the not yet of hope presents itself, that human reason comes into play.

In this exitus [*Ausgang*] and reditus [*Sammlung*], the intellect always enacts the ontological difference: in the relationship between "accident and substance," "signifier and signified," "image and truth," "sensual and intelligible being," and finally in the relationship between "effect and cause." In all of this, reason is set free upon the way into the *exterius* precisely to the extent that it perceptively reads inside the *interius*. This is how reason moves in the "inquisitio of the coagitatio": *discurrens de uno in aliud*, running from one thing to the other. In this extro-verted search, reason has always already intro-verted into the *interius*, and in its re-collecting reversion to the essential ground, it is at the same time underway along the path. This is what it means to say that, in the intuitus, the intellect is "occupied in seeking for the truth."[21] In following its natural movement, it is always already both emptied out [*entäußert*] into the *exterius* and at the same time gathered up and unified in the *interius* of the intus-legere. This is the manner in which thinking follows its circular path and is "sublated" in the threefold way that we already attempted to elucidate precisely in this field of tension [*Spannungsfeld*], which cannot be captured by reflexive reason.

Reason aims at the essence of the matter, for its object is *quod quid est*, that which is.[22] But it stretches out beyond this object into a deeper dimension, since the essence of the matter is itself determined on the basis of an even more original ground, one that precedes every *interius* of the essence. This ground is the "the heart of every existing thing": its "to be." "But esse is innermost in each thing and *most profoundly* inherent in all things since it is formal in respect of everything found in a thing."[23] Concerning this intimum of every interius and exterius, however, Thomas says that it is "the first effect, which is presupposed by every other. But it itself does not presuppose any other effect (or anything brought about [*ein Erwirktes*])."[24] To be is "more intimate than any other effect."[25]

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[20] *ST* 2–2.8.1.
[21] *ST* 2–2.180.3.
[22] *ST* 2–2.8.1.
[23] *ST* 1.8.1.

We saw a moment ago, however, that reason comes into play in the effect's relationship to its cause (and vice versa). Within this play of reason, one can speak of an intus-legere into the cause, since "everything actual brings about something similar to itself."[26] Thus a similitude to the effective cause in which the effect lies hidden holds sway in everything that has been produced by a cause. But the cause can be read in the effect. Therefore in an ultimate sense the intus-legere must be possible in the relationship of the first effect to its cause. Being, as the "likeness of divine goodness,"[27] must possess this same relationship to God himself. Here too we see unveiled the truth of the statement "The effect is hidden in the cause and vice versa." It is in just this way that the perceptive intus-legere has to come into play in the relationship of the first effect to its cause.

Let us first try to interpret this "and vice versa" more closely. For the sentence reads, *causa latet in effectu*: God reveals himself and hides himself "in" being, in his highest likeness. How are we to understand this? But a further question arises immediately from this one. Can we say that there is a reciprocal similitudo of God's first effect, which is being, to God and vice versa? Or shouldn't we say instead that just as the image is similar to the man, and not vice versa, so too is being similar to God and not vice versa!? And if we posit a *similitudo mutua*, wouldn't we thus be logically determining God and being, which is not God, in relation to each other within an order that comprehended both? Wouldn't being in this case be hypostasized as a thing over and against God, and wouldn't God be determined in relation to his first effect, which would inevitably suck God up into itself? But isn't all of this what we would assume if we were to say that God hides "in" being?[28]

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[24] *De pot.* 3.4.

[25] *De pot.* 3.7.

[26] *De pot.* 7.2.3.

[27] "To-be is the likeness of the divine goodness." *De ver.* 22.2.2.

[28] Thomas sees what is intended here: "But we ought not to understand that there is a reciprocal likeness between causes and effects; ... and this is because the cause does not depend on the effect, in such a way that it gives its similitude only to these or to those, but the effect depends on the cause, from which alone it receives the rational form of likeness by participation. And we indicate this dependence when we say that an effect is similar to its cause." *Div. nom.* 9.3.

3. Being as the "Center" ["*Mitte*"] of the Act of Speculative Thought

We said that being is the *center* of the speculative act of reason in thought's circular movement. But now this "center" has become questionable. Does this center in fact exist? Does being allow itself to be established as a center in such a way that we would be able to close the ontological difference between the center and the circling roundabout path [*Um-weg*] in reflection?

Thomas says that "being itself is the ultimate act in which all other things are able to participate while it itself participates in nothing."[29] But we need to recall here: God is not the *actus ultimus*. The actus ultimus is instead God's first effect and therefore, in a certain sense that has yet to be elucidated, being does *not* coincide with God.[30] So there is a difference between ipsum esse and God, or better: a difference that opens up into God's infinity. For this reason, one can say that God lies hidden "in" being itself.

But ipsum esse is "nothing" between God and the creature, for God sublates every third as a mediator—which does not mean as "pure mediation"!—between himself and the creature: "there cannot be any mediator between what is created and what is uncreated."[31] That which is other than subsistent being itself is "nothing." This "nothing" is what distinguishes the creature from God. Thus, because every mediator is eliminated, the actus ultimus, as God's first effect, is implicit in the absolute power of its cause, in God, which is the same thing as saying: being as being does not exist as a mediator between God and the creature. If we ask after its subsistence as being (!), it is God himself.

We now see more clearly how it is that, on the basis of being's difference from God, the effect on the one hand is latent in the cause, but on the other hand, though in its own way, the cause is latent in the effect. The intellect cannot therefore grasp the cause "in" being as God's first effect,[32] because it cannot come to a rest in the intermediary between God and the creature. If it were to take being as "first effect" for itself, then it would not enter into any *interius*.

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[29] *An* 6.2.

[30] Likewise, Heidegger: "'Being' … is not God." *Letter on Humanism*, in *Basic Writings* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008), 234. Yet being may not be turned into God's "vestibule" [*Vorhoff*], which leads into God's absolute holiness. This hypostasizing of the ideality of being as being has been carried out with speculative necessity in every philosophy of spirit that has sought to hold open the mediating dimension of being as being in order to transcend the creature, which closes itself up nominalistically as a factual *res*, into the absolute ground, that is, has sought to depotentiate it in the autonomy [*Selbstand*] appropriate to it. Duns Scotus's univocal ens commune, in its indifference to ens infinitum and finitum, has its roots in this. (cf. *Quodl.* 14.13). Likewise, Meister Eckhart: "For being is where God dwells as if in his vestibule.… Reason is God's Temple." *Sermon on Jesus Sirach*, 50.6*ff*.

[31] *De ver.* 8.17.

Thus reason enters into the "beginning," only insofar as it is always on the way "from one thing to the other," although the various things that exist are not God's first effect. Only when reason opens itself to being in such a way that it experiences the center of the circling circle as "nothing" to be fixed next to God and therefore is always already *in via* among the multiplicity of existing things is it able, in its transcendence of the finite, to attain God himself, the highest likeness to whom being "is."

Reason cannot therefore turn being into a center as a fixed point, even though it would be unable to operate if it were in fact separated from this "center." The circling progress is illuminated by a "center," which ignites and actualizes all thinking—even though thinking is nevertheless *not* able to be a movement around *this objectified center*; if it were, it would cancel itself out as thinking. Thus, in its operation in the circling around this objectified "center of being," reason undergoes a constant *contradiction*.

It moves in orbit around a center that "*is*" no center. It cannot turn this center into the place that speculation fixes as its point of departure, nor can it tarry in it. If it were to settle into this center, it would hypostasize being and would therefore fall into contradiction: "being is nothing"—"nothing is being."

Finite reason can attempt to resolve this contradiction in a variety of ways, for it is a powerful temptation for reason. For example, it could say that being itself "is" not. In this case, thinking would collapse back into the impotence of merely discursive understanding, which roams around in the region of things existing one after another and replaces reason's power of apprehension, which is open to the unifying ground of being, with the positing of "unifying," rationally fabricated concepts [*Begriffsgemächten*]. But this introduces a foreign element into being. God is thus postulated as the final "endpoint" that ties everything together.

Another temptation: it could say that being "is" not, and thus open up an abyss of nothingness between the finite being and God (the absolute *Res*). The finite is no longer sublated in God's infinite intellect. The light of mediating being has gone out. In this case, what stands at the beginning is no longer the Word, which proceeds in God *per modum intellectus*, but must be instead the absolute productive Will. Being, as God's first effect, has thus become a positing will to power.

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[32] *De pot.* 3.4.

A more profound temptation, perhaps the greatest, leads thought into the "place of the contradiction" itself. Upon arriving, reason experiences that being is "nothing." The contradiction immediately drives thought away, *toward the place* wherein being is *no longer* "empty being"—that is, nothing—but *is existing* as mediated being. The elimination of the contradiction, however, has to occur in two directions, for being is always already either infinite or finite being. Thus, in resolving the contradiction, reason is driven forward both into the finite and the infinite at the same time (!), and indeed away from the "center" of being at *a single* stroke, so that God gets determined in the things that lie beneath him in the incarnation of empty being. To be itself is degraded into a potency able to receive determination.

More important than all of this is the experience that reason itself cannot come to a rest in being as being in order, as ratio discurrens, to develop the unsurveyable landscape of existence. Being is not a ground that has a foundation in itself and stands next to God or over existing things (taken in themselves [*für sich*]). Being is ground-less [*Ab-grund*]. In other words, it is not "*in*" being as God's first effect that *relucet similitudo causae* [the likeness of the cause shines out],[33] or otherwise being would be substantialized into *a* being and posited for its own sake. In truth, being itself is "the likeness of divine goodness."[34] As similitudo, the light of being shines out from creatures and reflects into them: "*Things are* to the extent that they bear the likeness of God."[35] We therefore already see what sort of danger and temptation we fall into when we want to say something "about" being as being. We fall into the temptation of fixing being as a "center," of seeking the similitudo divinae bonitatis in the primus effectus and thereby sacrificing being to the dialectic of the "absolute contradiction."

But there is no beginning "*in*" being itself, unless we wish to sit contradiction on the throne of reason. As being, being itself "*is*" *similitudo*, and with great depth of vision Thomas says that being is "similitudo *divinae boni-*

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[33] Cf. *ST* 2–2.180.3.2.

[34] *De ver.* 22.2.2.

[35] *SCG* 3.65.

tatis,"[36] which is not the pouring out of something that was itself "previously" withheld or kept back. Being can never be fixed in itself, not even in the moment of a mere determination of reflection, in order *then* to empty itself, or in order to make possible the unfolding of the ontological difference for reason. Self-diffusive being, which is *gift* [*Gabe*] through and through, does not start out "contained in itself" in this self-donation. If it did, being would not be given away without remainder. We will return to expand on this point later.

Nevertheless, being as "center" remains *necessary* to reason, so much so that reason always already exists as reason *in via*, that is, as understanding [*Verstand*]. As we will show, reason ultimately enters the path only on the basis of the senses that spring from it. But when reason gets caught up in the "center" of substantialized being, the "little way" gets eclipsed by the incalculable fullness of material being; that is, the path is left behind as a "thing of the past."

The difference of to be from the beings that are always already given in actuality comes to light in the movement of circling thought. It is determined by being's difference from God, and this difference remains at the heart of being as the depth that provides its measure [*massgebende Tiefe*]. The ontological difference itself is the "radius" that can never be closed in a linear fashion, the radius that connects all the movement of thought to its "center." The "linear progress" of ratio can never be made into a self-enclosed circle around this center.

Reason therefore perceives the cause "through" the effect. But it does not see God "through" his first effect, being. Even though, *in* every effect, the similitudo of the cause shines out and is reflected, the first effect is itself wholly and completely similitudo, which shines out into the always already actualized existing thing.

But Thomas says, "To see a thing in a mirror is to see a cause in its effect wherein its likeness is reflected. Hence speculation would seem to be reduced to meditation."[37] Circling thought is therefore at its deepest level *speculative!* Reason looks at being through the things that are, without ever being able to reduce these things to being in a linear fashion. It sees in the light of being without being able to tie down being as being or apprehend it in itself. The light of being, since it doesn't cling to itself or allow reason to come to an *end* "next to" God, is therefore precisely what compels speculative reason to transcend beings into the absolute ground. This act of transcendence enraptures reason, which has been illuminated by being, elevating reason into the light of absolute truth, while reason precisely thereby enters onto the "little way" in the multiplicity of finite being.[38] In the illuminated darkness of reason's encounter with God, thought has therefore measured out [*durchmessen*] the ontological difference, the radius of the circling motion of thought, in the threefold mode of the "sublation" that we laid out above. It has made contact with the ground of the positively finite being and thereby discovered the form [*Gestalt*] in which it is caused in the difference between to be and the things that are, that is, at the level of its participation in being. But because thought has experienced the difference of being from God at the same time in this difference, which has revealed that being as being does *not* subsist next to God, the discovery of the dimension of participation does not remain stuck in being "as such," but it opens up at the same time to man's communion with all that exists, in which the unifying *vis concretiva* of being as love shines out. This occurs by means of reason, which is *capax entis*. Thomas Aquinas is therefore able to say, "Now all created causes have *one common* effect which is *being*, although each one has its peculiar effect whereby they are differentiated" (*De pot.* 7.2).

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[36] *De ver.* 22.2.2.

[37] *ST* 2–2.180.3.

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[38] Here is where the truth hides, which gives rise to the so-called contradiction that does not allow thought to rest in being but always already drives it onward to the concrete res, whether that be infinite or finite.

II

A Preliminary Elucidation of the "Crisis of Being" from the Perspective of Bonitas

1. Thought's Struggle and Temptation in the Experience of the "Sense of Being" [*"Seins-sinn"*]

It will be claimed that no matter how much we may deny it, we persist in trying to make being itself the place from which the speculative unfolding takes its "pure beginning." To be sure, we do make our "beginning" in being, as Hegel does in his *Logic*. Nevertheless, the reason we do so is to unmask this being in its "pseudo-subsistence" and thus to see through the contradiction that had been elevated into the basic substance of speculative thought.

But isn't thought's fall into contradiction inevitable to the extent that it takes "being as being" to be the goal of its movement? Don't we necessarily posit the contradiction if we begin with being as being? No—if we correctly assess the beginning, we also overcome the contradiction. The contradiction is always already resolved if thought follows being's kenosis, which does not allow reason to come to a rest in the pseudo-wealth of a substantialized center of being, but orders [*befiehlt*] reason into the poverty of the "little way." By obeying this command, thought *successfully undergoes* [*besteht*] the ontological difference and overcomes the temptation of the contradiction that says, "being is nothing." We are able to sublate the contradiction, therefore, only if thought has always already "left" this critical "place," and entered in its finitude onto the "path." When thought does so, we see the truth of the claim that being is *similitudo divinae bonitatis*.[1] Reason, which stands at the bidding of absolute love, desubstantializes the vacillation of being; it cannot moor itself in being but is radically turned toward the multiplicity of the finite. It always has God "at its back" [*im Rücken*], so to speak. But this "absence of God," this darkness and distance, is a sign of his nearness. What would truly alienate us from God is possessing being as something "juxtaposed to him." The "pure mediation" of being, which is "nothing," by contrast unveils God's infinite loving presence.[2] In this case, the speculative proposition "about" being does not get entangled in a pseudo-subsistence that finite reason would ascribe to being, as a *medium inter creatum et increatum*.[3]

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[1] *De ver.* 22.2.2.

It is from *this* "beginning" that the radical movement of thought finds its way, which passes through (nonsubsistent) being, and is able to *attain an encounter with God himself, hidden* "in" being, at the very same time that it comes to a thought-full agreement with the world of created things. The struggle facing us calls us, in all the trial and tribulation that lies in the "place" of the speculative unfolding, where all thought seems to be set at odds with itself and driven into the dialectic of contradiction, to withstand the temptation to falsely hypostasize being: *in listening obedience [Hörigkeit] to the necessary or need-relieving [Not-wendig] "sense of being,"* which cancels out and annihilates all pseudo-subsistence and in which being unveils itself in its absolute positivity as God—or as finite being.[4] But because being, as similitudo divinae bonitatis, cannot cling to itself in indecision next to God and because the necessary sense of being becomes manifest to us precisely therein, the sense of being, which frees thought from the prison of being's hypostasis, has its roots in the bonitas divina, which gives "unreservedly" everything that it gives.

2. How Should We Understand the "Sense of Being" in Light of Divine Goodness?

What does the "sense of being" mean? Is there in fact anything asked in this question? Doesn't this question once again take being as being in itself to be a mediator between God and the creature, and isn't the attempt then made to explain how and why this being "as such," in relation to God and the creature, has a "sense"? Isn't being in this case projected toward a telos, which does not lie in itself, so that it can come to completion and find itself only in an "other"? And if we then go on to say that being *is* either God or creature, then aren't we inevitably saying that being means the same thing (*is*), regardless of whether we're referring to God or to the creature, and, as univocal *ens indifferens*, it resolves the ontological vacillation at one stroke by affirming itself as both God and world? But doesn't this also then raise the question concerning the "sense" of God? Doesn't God then have to disappear into being in such a way that he would mediate himself and find his own meaning precisely by giving determination to the being that is yet "undetermined" with respect to its goal by negating that indeterminacy and making it concrete—whereby being would then also realize its "sense"? Does God not thereby become entangled with the being of beings and thus with finitude as such? But if the sense of being is interpreted in this way, wouldn't God be interpreted as a process [*ein "werdender Gott"*] that achieves its sense through the creation of the finite, an act imposed on God by necessity? And if, moreover, man is *capax entis* as embodied spirit and precisely *as* such opens the ontological difference speculatively, is it not then *he* who gives being its "sense," insofar as he enacts the determination of undetermined being at every moment by opening up and interpreting the difference, and guides it to its concrete mediation, while thus, in doing so, sublating the (substantial) in itself character of abstract and empty being in himself as subject?

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[2] Here we would have to explore further the nature of the experience of "God's distance" that lies behind modern "atheism." Does this atheism not at bottom provide the opportunity for a deeper experience of the impossibility of hypostasizing being next to God? Hegel himself had attempted to unveil the same recirculation of being and "nothing" in his *Logic* by means of "spiritual reason," the "spirit" or "mind" ["*Geist*"] energized by the Pneuma (Love!), in order to dehypostasize being and to that extent also to mediate the finite in the absolute. Why this endeavor did not succeed is something that will become clearer later on.

[3] Cf. *De ver.* 8.17.

[4] On the basis of this obedience to being, which experiences its "suffering and seriousness" in the impossibility of hypostasizing being—that is, in being as "nothing" (i.e., in negativity itself)—thought grows into cosmic ontological solidarity [*Mitsein*] with all actuality through the gift of being, which, in likeness to its source, does not cling to itself.

The problem is that being does not allow itself to be posited "in advance" as a pseudo-subsistent thing in order that the question of the "sense of being" may *subsequently* (!) be raised. The "sense of being" can only express the fact that reason, in the speculative act of thought that is obedient to being, experiences this being as a self-emptying nonbeing *next to* God, and that therefore being, although it is "the actuality of all acts and therefore the perfection of all perfections,"[5] is nevertheless a *non subsistens*,[6] that it does not subsist as the *actus ultimus,*[7] but is always already God—"or" creature. This decision, however, is never something that being makes on its own. If it did, being would ultimately possess itself and would be closed up in the "glory" of its hypostasizing, prior to all self-emptying. The self-emptying of being itself would be nothing more than a show, a pseudo-obedience, because everything would have always already been secured in advance, already left behind and made "a thing of the past." The negativity of the nonsubsistence of being would not be taken seriously. Being would pass through its different modes only in appearance. But historicity and finitude would reveal themselves as a provocation, a means that being, which has been substantalized and panlogistically conceptualized, uses to prove itself.

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[5] *De pot.* 7.2.9.

[6] *De pot.* 1.1. "Now, being is not a being, a reality that is in some sense distinct from all the things that are. On the other hand, it is not at all a determinate aspect in them which is common to them all" (L.-B. Geiger, "La participation," 356); "One may quite correctly affirm that 'the being of beings is not a being'" (323). Or: "By virtue precisely of its commonness, existence is an abstract notion. That is why existence does not exist." E. Gilson, "Limites existentielles de la philosophie," in *L'Existence* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), 69–87, here 69. We will later have to explain more thoroughly why the "nothing" that we speak of here can very easily tempt thinking to empty being into a "pure concept."

Because, "outside" of God, being is always already finite ens, the investigation of being's inherence "in" the finite ens is therefore already reason's encounter with God, the transcendental deduction of being from God. Just as we cannot achieve the foregrasp [*Vorgriff*] of being as being through a linear sublimation of being on the basis of the ens, so too we cannot draw the difference of being from God as God's first effect in a linear way by fixing on the absolute as its starting point. "The being which inheres in creatures *cannot be understood except as derived from the divine being.*"[8] It is only the *inest of esse* that allows us to make the "derivation." Every unfolding in the sense of a *deductum* goes astray if it does not draw its power from the weight of the *esse, quod rebus creatis inest*: but this is the "weight" of the creative positing of the ens.

To speak of thought's listening obedience to the necessary sense of being therefore means that man is open to *the* ground, on the basis of which alone being as being can be speculatively unfolded, that is, dehypostasized: the bonitas divina. "Bonum autem est *diffusivum* sui."[9] Receptive obedience [*vernehmende Hörigkeit*] to the necessary sense of being therefore means unfolding being precisely as this similtudo divinae bonitatis into the twofold *single* difference, from the finite and toward the infinity of the *ipsum esse subsistens*, without fixing it as the point of departure for speculation and positing contradiction at the outset.

The transcendental constitution of the good or of being as love preserves this speculative beginning, without binding it in the logicized, rationally calculated hypostasis of the ontological vacillation. Being as being does not dif-

[7] *An.* 6.2.

[8] *De pot.* 3.5.

[9] *ST* 1.5.4.2.

fuse itself "*out of its own resources*" ["*aus sich*"]. To be sure, it is the highest likeness of God and represents a *completum et simplex*, but it is also *non subsistens.*[10]

Listening obedience to the sense of being therefore reveals further that being's absolute self-diffusion may not be hypostasized into a "speculative realm" on the basis of an absolute self-diffusion, because it is not participated in as a self-enclosed part next to God that is apportioned out in the finite. This latter is the temptation we face whenever we interpret participation in being as the mere composition of being with a recipient subject.

Being is instead participated in "according to the diffusion of its processions" out of God.[11] The diffusion therefore never begins from a point next to God, just as God himself does not first start in the state of not-yet-having-been-emptied (in se) as a mere essence sealed up in itself, in order subsequently to mediate himself to himself. Instead, the divine nature is always already shared in the actuality of God's inner life [*im innergöttlichen Selbstvollzug*]. Thus being unveils itself in its origin as "pure mediation."[12]

3. The Goodness of God as the Necessity of Being's "Pure Mediation": The Beginning of the Speculative Temptation

What we just said is decisive for reason's speculative reaching out [*ausgreifen*] toward and achieving a foregrasp [*vorgreifen*] of being as being. The speculative act has its beginning in the existing entities that lie before us, in which we are always already involved and in the midst of which we find ourselves as existing beings.[13] If we therefore begin with what lies before us as given, then reason's foregrasp of being as being is in a certain sense a transcending re-view, a looking back [*Rück-sicht*] upon being, on the basis of which the entity is called a being. This re-view (speculatio), however, does not get mired in being as such. The passage into being does not end in an ultimate, sublimated extension of the ens, in which reason would necessarily have to situate and secure being on the ground of the finite, and thus hand it over to contradiction. The speculative foregrasp stands within the necessity of deriving just this being from God; that is, it stands in the tribunal of being's nonsubsistence. Thus, in one and the same act, the speculative act swings "backward" into the dimension of being as being even while the nonsubsistence of being calls it to swing "forward" into the dimension of the world of beings. In this back and forth swing, being is unveiled as "pure mediation" and precisely not dissolved as the actus essendi, qua actus of the concrete. We also thereby overcome the temptation to fix the "to be" as the summit of the basic store of finite, "certain," and conceptually graspable substances.

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[10] *De pot.* 1.1. What concerns us here is, not least, a dialogue with Hegel, who, as we will show in a later work, brought to completion the course of modern thought, which stands in the destiny [*das Geschick*] of the hypostasizing of being. It is not possible in the present context to enter into all of this, since such an endeavor would lie beyond the framework of this study.

[11] *ST* 1.75.5.1. The nonsubsistence of being makes impossible the pantheistic emanation of God according to the processio of his primus effectus, but esse as completum et simplex unveils itself as the fullness of God's gift *par excellence*, which, as "pure mediation," overcomes the deistic division of God and world as absolute essence and finite res.

[12] G. Siewerth has the same point in view in *Der Thomismus als Identitätssystem*, 76: "As pure, simple universality, being is therefore not a reality next to God, but it is necessarily an 'idea,' the reality of which is rooted in divine thought itself. But its structure is to be ideal mediation." Conversely, the substantialized, fixed being in its abstract, unmediated identity is only a likeness of the lifeless, solitary God, the essentia infinita, which requires the wealth of spirit in order to mediate itself. But "although the angels and the souls of the saints are always with God, nevertheless, if plurality of persons did not exist in God, it would follow that He would be alone or solitary," *ST* 1.31.3.1.

[13] Cf. Louis Lavelle, *La Présence Totale* (Paris: Aubier, 1934), 11: "It [consciousness] grasps the act in its very exercise, not isolated of course but always tied to emergent states and appearing objects."

If, however, the speculative view of being as being in the analectical foregrasp on the basis of the finite ens is *the same* as the katalectical *deductum ab esse divino*, to use Thomas's language, then in the same moment in which the understanding throws a "substantializing veil" over being as something that has a reality "in itself," so as to be able to master it on the basis of the ens, it also reduces the divine being to the level of the finite as its original life source. It is in the end one and the same thing to sublimate being in a merely linear way on the basis of the ens as the ultimate horizon that circumscribes it, which ends with the fixed quantity of "empty" being, and to derive being from God, next to whom being clings to itself. If we hypostasize being, then we necessarily posit at the same time a loveless, greedy God, impotent to create, a God who cannot communicate being because he is enclosed in himself, a God who keeps being from emptying itself and therefore opens space for the pseudo-god of being's hypostasis, which finite reason erects for itself in this undertaking. God's love is frozen into a block of absolute essence. Reason now has to set itself to work and reintroduce the negation (the lost nonsubsistence) in order to redeem self-withholding being and thereby to free the God who has been fixed as essence from his inseity [*aus seinem An-sich*] in the whirl of negations. But even the acrobatics of the absolute contradiction do not get us any further.

We are gradually coming to see what we will experience more thoroughgoingly as the speculative temptation that besets the thinking of being.

III

Being and "Nothing"

THE TEMPTATION OF THOUGHT

1. *Esse* as *Completum et Simplex, Sed non Subsistens*: The "Convertibility" [*selbige Verwendung*] of Being and "Nothing"

Ipsum esse is the "ultimate act,"[1] and, since it is thus the "actuality of all acts"[2] and "the perfection of all perfections," it is the "actuality of all things and even of their forms."[3] To being, "nothing can be added other than non-being, quod non potest esse nec forma nec materia."[4] Being, as the "first effect of God," is in its infinite actuality the "likeness of God."

But being does not remain stuck in itself in this actuality; to put it metaphorically, being is not caught up in and captivated by its own glory. Being is not an effective actuality in the sense of an *efficiens*, since it operates as the "likeness of the divine goodness." "Goodness, however, is described as self-diffusive in the sense that an end is said to move,"[5] and, further, Thomas says, "Esse itself has the character of the good,"[6] for "whatever is found to have the character of an end also has the character of good."[7] Thus being is nothing other than self-diffusing actuality. But it does not subsist as a thing between God and the creature. Thomas therefore says, "'Esse' signifies something complete and simple, *but non-subsistent*."[8] As pure mediation, to be "is" not an existing thing, an *ens* [*kein Seiendes*].

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[1] *An.* 6.2.
[2] *De pot.* 7.2.9.
[3] *ST* 1.4.1.3.
[4] *De pot.* 7.2.9.
[5] *ST* 1.5.4.2.
[6] *De ver.* 21.2.
[7] *De ver.* 21.2.
[8] *De pot.* 1.1.

But what does *ens* mean? "An ens is, as it were, a thing that has esse; it is the ens alone that is a substance, which subsists."[9] The ens is a thing that has being. The ens has being, but ens, as esse habens, is the one and only substance that subsists, for the substance "is the proper recipient of esse."[10] Now, if Thomas goes on to say that the substance is most properly called *ens*, then, with respect to being, which does not subsist, we can affirm that it "is" a non ens in a particular sense.

To say that "to be" is not a "being," however, is not to turn it into a "pure potentiality." Ontologically speaking, it is rather the case that "act is always more perfect than potency."[11] Moreover, it becomes evident that neither form nor matter is extrinsic to *esse*. It is never legitimate to think of esse in its nonsubsistence as potency and to call it "nothing" in this particular sense. Not only should we say that to be is a nonbeing, but we should say that it *is* "nothing"! There is therefore no contradiction in calling esse, as a completum et simplex, "nothing," if we are thus simply bringing to expression its "nonsubsistent" character.

In thus highlighting the "nothing," we are not advocating any nihilism. To the contrary, once we run through the individual speculative temptations, it will become apparent that modern nihilism has its roots precisely in the substantializing of being as such and that the "nothing" (non subsistens) has also been brought to "subsistence" along the same path. When we say that *ipsum esse non subsistens* means "nothing," we are not using the word in exactly the same way Heidegger uses it, although he seems to have the ***non subsistens*** in view when he says, "Being and nothing are not given alongside one another. The one employs itself for the other in a kinship whose essential fullness we have as yet scarcely pondered.... Being no more 'is' than nothing."[12]

[9] *Met.* 12.1.

[10] *SCG* 2.55.

[11] *De pot.* 7.2.9.

[12] Heidegger, "On the Question of Being," in *Pathmarks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 317. We interpret the following expressions in our sense: "Just as we are not able to say that running itself runs, so too we are unable to say that being itself is" (Thomas, *In de Hebdom.* 2). "It is not proper to say that being is, but rather that something is by virtue of being" (*Div. nom.* 8.1). "That which is common to many is not outside the many except by the reason alone. Thus, animal is not something outside Socrates and Plato and the other animals except in the intellect that apprehends the form of animal stripped of all its individuating and specifying characteristics. For man is that which truly is animal; otherwise, it would follow that in Socrates and Plato there are several animals, namely, common animal itself, common man, and Plato himself. Much less, then, is common being itself something outside all existing things, save only for being in the intellect. Hence, if God is common being, the only thing that will exist is that which exists solely in the intellect (!)" (*SCG* 1.26). It should be noted that the modern horizontal splitting and "stratifying" of organisms, on the basis of various "underlying" dimensions, each of which is enclosed

The more we conceive being as fullness *given away*, the more its nonsubsistence comes to light. The absolute intimacy of being in the creature as God's highest "gift" precisely excludes its clinging-to-itself in an ideal ontological vacillation. Here it is once again revealed that depotentiating God the Creator into an absolute essence-block, closed up in itself, implies the impossibility of perceiving being as "gift." Indifferentiating being's kenosis in this way also forces its nonsubsistence from our speculative view.

Precisely *because* nothing can be external to being as fullness other than non ens,[13] insofar as God presupposes "nothing" in his communication of being as a material (mater!), receptive principle, being is not set off *against* the finite (as against something "other" in relation to itself), but is rather a *non subsistens* as a gift and fullness that does not cling to itself. In other words, being is not "something outside the existing thing."[14] The pseudo-subsisting ipsum esse, by contrast, possesses only a pseudo-fullness, since it cannot in fact exist in reality.

Let us pose the question once again with all precision! How should being and "nothing" be convertible if this non ens is always already differentiated from being, since "nothing is separated from ens except non-ens"[15] and to being "there is nothing external other than non-being"[16]? We might be able to say that, in order for there to be any separation of being and nonbeing at all, there would "first" have to be a certain sameness or convertibility between them, which would provide the condition of possibility for such a separation. But doesn't this simply posit a contradiction at the beginning all over again?

2. Elucidation of the Origins of the Convertibility of Being and "Nothing" and the Greek Situation of Thought

The question we have just posed is of the greatest importance. It compels us to dig a bit more deeply. At this point, we can enter more thoroughly into this theme by sketching out in broad strokes one of the basic moments in

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entirely within itself—the inorganic, vegetative, sensitive, and "intellective" aspects—and which only so to speak crystallize in individuals, has its roots in the fixing of being and thus of the comprehensive universals in intellectu (in the mind). The forgetting of being's nonsubsistence, which gives rise to an overemphasis on the concrete subsistence of the ens, led then to the abstract—i.e., the one-sided—forms of biologism, psychologism, Lebensphilosophie, and so forth.

[13] *De pot.* 7.2.9.

[14] *SCG* 1.26.

[15] *In de Trinit.* 4.1.

[16] *De pot.* 7.2.9.

the development of Western thought that contributed to the development of the question at issue, namely, the process by which Aristotle "incarnates" the Platonic idea.

So long as the idea was conceived in an *essentiell* ["*essentiell*"] manner as the really real, it was necessarily opposed to the nec quid, nec quale—that is, the nonessentiality of matter—and established on the far side of the chaos, the "yawning openness," of matter. Because matter was fundamentally posited as the principle of the multiplicity and the contingency of "beings" (by which is meant the material things existing in the world), the ontological character of the idea necessarily had to come to light in the fact that it secured itself *against* the multiplicity of the merely finite, already by virtue of its being an existing thing. For Plato, the idea, as *forma*, was not yet communicated from out of being's superessentiality. When we consider it in terms of essence, the power [*Mächtigkeit*] of the idea cannot manifest itself exhaustively in the "sublation of matter." What form's sublation of matter designates is both the form's self-communication as well as its gathering up of the material multiplicity into the organized structure [*das Gefüge*] of the substance. Insofar as it remains an essentiell positivity, the positivity of the idea is *not yet able* to negate the matter's negativity. The form does "not yet" give the whole being; matter is constituted in an otherness opposed to the idea. Because of the idea's positivity, this otherness is not yet "transnihilated" ["*durchnichtet*"]—crossed out and crossed through—and brought to manifestation in its nothingness.

Thus the separateness of the idea implies an ambiguity: its "power to be" ["*Seinsmächtigkeit*"] distances it from matter, while it will turn out to be precisely the same power to be (which remains still veiled at this point) that is capable of "nihilating" the otherness of the matter, of sublating it and thus transforming the distance into an intimacy. The transnihilation of matter into the non ens of mere potentiality is therefore nothing other than the idea's freeing itself [*sich-absolvieren*] from its being fused together both with matter and with its own essentiell structure. In this fusion, the idea is not yet itself in a positive sense; it is not yet mediated with itself. Even if the idea exists in an elevated sense, it is in a certain way itself only in an as-yet abstract identity, and therefore the idea remains entangled with its not-yet-entirely-negated otherness as its limit. Nevertheless, the negativity of the other as other is already implicitly given in the idea's transcendence and self-being.

If it seems at first glance that the idea secures itself against the merely finite and holds fast to this positivity as a counterreaction to the negative (otherness), since it lacks the capacity to negate the finite as the negation of itself in its self-actualization, it is nevertheless its transcendence in self-being that provides the condition of possibility that begins to open up the intimacy of *being* to the finite; the finite is indeed ultimately affirmed *as* finite only by the positivity of the being that doesn't cling to itself. The negation of the negation, both of the material dimension as well as the entire essentiell structuredness of being, unveils itself as the original affirmation of the finite *as finite* by being the independence [*Selbststand*] that always belongs to it.

The idea becomes "fluid," able to become incarnate, however, only when it opens up to being and breaks through identity (insofar as identity is abstract and bound to non-negated otherness) or, in other words, only when it is "de-idealized" or dehypostasized. In this case, the essentiell limits no longer keep the nec quid, nec quale of matter at bay. This is precisely what is expressed in the statement that nothing more can be added to being that is extrinsic to it other than nonbeing. In this breakthrough, the "merely finite" is at the same time stripped of all restive forces, all the (not yet negated) forces that would affect being. But the finite is nevertheless not extinguished in this sublation; instead, it is for the first time affirmed in its finitude by the intimacy being is now able to have with it. The incarnation of the idea, the emphasis on the causae secundae, the sublation of the finite in the infinite (in the negation of negation)—as well as the immediate, nonoppressive, liberating presence of God in the finite that lets it be—all imply one another. The incarnation of the idea in the finite and the sublation of the finite in the absolute are simply two sides of the same process.

To be sure, this step into the superessentiality of being is not something Aristotle was able wholly to achieve, despite the radical drive toward being as being, in which *hyle* transcends itself into the ether, the *human being* transcends itself into the nous that supervenes from the outside, and the entire order of the *world* transcends itself into God (exemplified in the order of the general, which resides in him as leader and at the same time resides in the order of the army).

Being as being forms the foundation of Aristotle's thinking. He made space for it in the mediating position he gave to metaphysics "between" physics and "theology." Although this dimension did not become explicit as such, he nevertheless opened it up. It is only by virtue of the "fullness of time," in which God revealed himself in the absolute positivity of the Trinity in absolute self-mediation, that the essentiell dimension of the idea as a medium inter creatum et increatum was sublated into being as being, and the ideal vacillation of being, which measuring reason is always tempted to fix in place, is overcome.[17]

Nevertheless, in the age that "followed" the "fullness of time," the great temptation arose to transform the opening up of being into a "past" event by making supernatural revelation simply a theological a priori, fixing it, so to speak, as something that was unveiled, once and for all in its total significance, in order, thus, to get beyond the obsolete approach of the Greeks, who, it is said, still did their thinking *in statu naturae lapsae*. This fossilized opening of being as being, which is made a thing of the past, however, led to a new substantialization of being in ideality and thereby to a new "Greek situation" of thought, to an absorption of being into the *res* or the *essentia*,[18] on the basis of which "the thing takes its name."[19]

For Aristotle, the *forma* remains the whole of a thing's "being." Contingency comes from the matter. But the otherness or the negation of being's positivity takes on a different meaning in light of being as being, as it was liberated and opened to thought by the "fullness of time." Being as being negates negation in a complete way. The other is no longer left "outside." Being left outside occurs when the power to be does not extend beyond the Platonic idea that still clings to itself and persists in its abstract and unmediated identity. But now the other is "taken up into being" in the mode of nonbeing, though of course not as something that would affect or determine being from the outside. The category of "otherness" gets reconceived here. The multiplicity of the ideas, the *koinōnia* of which is permeated by the category of "otherness" that applies to the *mundus sensibilis and intelligibilis*,[20] blends into the melting pot of being, into the *perfectio omnium perfectionum*. The fullness of the ideas is gathered up into being as *completum et simplex par excellence*, but otherness does not congeal into an otherness that is *juxtaposed to* the *completum et simplex*. Indeed, this would eliminate precisely the negation of negation—that is, its sublation in the ideality of being—and would once again depotentiate being into something determined externally by otherness. No, otherness unveils itself in the *non subsistens* of precisely this *completum et simplex*, which can never take hold of itself next to God but rather "comes to itself," is at home with itself [*bei sich*] or subsists only in the variety and multiplicity of the finite. What it means, on the one hand, for the actus actuum (= esse) not to be *God* is simply that it does not subsist in an ontological vacillation next to God (finitude); what it means for the *completum et simplex* not to be an entity, on the other hand, is that it is not finite—that is, it is *ipsum esse* per se subsistens—or God.

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[17] Cf. the elaborations of this point in Part A, chapter II, this volume.

[18] How and why the hypostasizing of being coincides with its essentializing is something we will address in Part A, chapter IV, this volume.

[19] *De ver.* 1.1.

[20] Cf. Plato, *Sophist*, 248–49.

By virtue of its being-alone-with-itself, the idea still implies otherness as a remainder. Being's being-alone-with-itself, by contrast, affirms the negation of negation *simpliciter*, for there is nothing external to being other than nonbeing. The idea's power to be is of course preserved in this and transcended into an ultimate fullness, while conversely the *morphē*'s essentiell limits are left behind. This is why Thomas says of non ens "that it is *neither* able to be form *nor* matter."[21]

We can understand the problem of whether the convertibility of being and "nothing" has to come before the division between being and nonbeing in order for the crisis of being's self-affirmation in its positivity to be able to occur, if we consider the fate [*Geschick*] of modern metaphysics.

We sought to show how the theological a priori held open the horizon of being as being and immobilized reason, which "has always already been" with being, in this "exhaustively" revealed dimension. Later we will explore all of this at an even deeper level. But it already becomes apparent here that this immobilization once again hypostasized being and re-ascribed to it the character of an "entity," so that the actualization of transcendence toward being as being, in the movement of which Greek metaphysics has its place, collapsed back into the "Greek" beginning, albeit now in the medium of the theological a priori. The nonsubsistence of being got lost from the view of speculative reason. The "nothing" (non subsistens) was then introduced in order to bring being out of this new, abstract identity. In this way, otherness was once again turned into something that determined being from the outside. The *non subsistens* is thus posited as a goad [*Stachel*] next to being and fused together with being in ideality. Being itself has not yet affirmed itself positively as itself. God comes to be affected by the nothingness of the possibilia in the divine intellect.

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[21] *De pot.* 7.2.9.

Creation appears as the negation of this negation and thus as God's freeing himself from determination by the finite. Contradiction is turned into the starting point of the speculative unfolding.

The great temptation here consists in thinking that, if God had always already excluded the "nothing," he would have to congeal into a frozen essence-block, he would have to make the actualization of his absolute affirmation a "past" event through the negation of negation and sink back into abstract identity with himself, an identity that leaves otherness outside of itself.

From the side of the finite, the temptation appears thus: to be has to congeal into a res in order to avoid the thing's being continually swallowed up in the dimension of being as being, which "is" *not*; being thus has to concretize itself constantly into a res through reason, which gives expression to this convertibility of being and "nothing." Reason therefore has to crack open the res's in-itselfness by means of the contradiction, in order thereby to bring the in-itselfness to life: by sublating the truth as substance in the subject!

The dynamizing of the negation that occurred in modern metaphysics out of a concern for the desubstantializing of being, however, itself stood within the fate of the hypostasizing of being. For the negation of negation *pre* (!)-supposes God in abstract identity as "mere" essence and so as unfree for his otherness, just as it immobilizes substance pro-visionally as mere res, in which the superessentiality of being has been submerged and now has to be liberated. In both cases, being is itself as *not* itself in a positive sense; that is, it is constructed simply as a "potential" for absolute positivity, a potential that is able to be determined one way or the other. This is precisely the fate of the substantializing of being *praeter res*, which was inevitably condemned to being's withdrawal into reason as a concept, for "common being itself is not something apart from every existing thing except in the intellect alone."[22] What we see here is that the substantializing of being—that is, the submerging of being in the res—at the same time always also expresses the conceptualizing of being in reason. This logicized being, which Hegel inherited and, despite its convertibility with the "nothing" that Hegel proclaimed in his *Logic*, was therefore unable to be experienced as fullness and thought in a speculatively concrete manner. Man alone remained as the executor of the absolute contradiction of logicized being. Man is the one who allows the *eschaton* of the mediation of the finite in the infinite to come to pass in the reflection of absolute knowledge.

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[22] *SCG* 1.26.

Reason has in this way established itself as the place wherein all speculative unfolding occurs; it brings both the finite and the infinite to itself out of the univocal ontological vacillation of ens indifferens and "lets it be."

What we said earlier about the dual unity of being's difference from the infinite and the finite has been perverted here into a dreadful *similitudo*. God has now discovered his self-mediation in the ontological *difference* between being and beings, which now begins in the contradiction. But because reason has substantialized being as a thing next to God, the absolute is thus affected in a manner that contradicts his divinity. The exinanitio of being out of the contradiction ("being is nothing") is the act by which God resolves this affection and raises himself up to absolute freedom.

But the exinanitio of being is not a linear extension of being into the existing thing. The necessary sense of being unveiled this truth to us. What we have in modern metaphysics, however, is contradiction, which assumes for itself the function of the necessary sense of being (i.e., the dynamic of being as love) and ruptures the understanding's linear extension of being into the ens through the use of dialectic.

3. The Twofold False Continuity between "To Be" and Existing Entities

But reason cannot pass from entities to esse through a continuous ascent. The attempt to establish such a continuity would mean nothing more than a unilateral extension of beings, a sublimation that would make genuine transcendence impossible.

If reason falls to this temptation, then it becomes "possible" for it to "liquefy" the ens in such a way that the entire array of created beings would be dissolved into the fluidity of its supporting ground, with the result, in fact, that if one then took seriously the *non subsistens*, all existing beings would be sacrificed to the nihilistic "nothing." Whenever being is suspended in the vacillation, then the "nothing," too, gets set in place. If the ens is reduced to *this* ground, it cannot but dissolve into the "nothing."

Conversely, there is also no continuity from being to beings in the sense that one would be able to characterize the finite as the ultimate, crystallized, and concretized extension of a universal being that pours itself out in an undifferentiated way. Because this being, so conceived, would have achieved the *complete* breadth of its selfhood in the totality of what exists, the ontological difference would thus become fundamentally transparent to reflection and so closed; moreover, the outcome of this speculative a priori would be nothing more than the ontological myth of the "eternal return of the same." In this case, too, if one wanted to take seriously the *non subsistens*, one would surrender all existing reality to the nihilistic "nothing."

As the *actualitas omnium actuum* and *perfectio omnium perfectionum*,[23] to be is "formal with respect to everything in the thing."[24] But to be is not only formal "respectu omnium quae *in re* sunt"; it is also "the actuality of all things."[25] But if it is substance that is called *ens* in the proper sense, then the difference between being and beings opens up the "relationship" of the non-subsisting ipsum esse to the substance, which is called ens in the proper sense: "for strictly speaking ens is said to be that which has esse in itself, namely, the substance."[26] Thus one can say that esse is itself in the substance and that the ontological difference unveils itself as the "path" by which esse comes to subsistence: in an ever more profoundly grasped return to its "own" [*Eigene*]—that is, to itself—in the finite entity.

On the basis of the appropriative event [*Er-eignis*] of being's arrival into subsistence, the finite is fitted [*verfügt*] into evolution in the cosmic order that has its roots in being. The telos of this ordinance is man, who, as embodied spirit, is able to bend himself back from the outermost externality to the innermost interiority of his spiritual nature, and who thus, in his return to himself, crosses the "entire" span of the ontological difference of the being that arrives in finite subsistence and so comes into its own. Now, because in actualizing this subsistence-event man actualizes not only the difference between being and beings but also the difference between ipsum esse and God, he thus becomes in this recapitulatio the one who interprets by himself the infinite loving presence of God to all created beings in a fateful way. It is just this actualization, however, that gets eliminated by the twofold false continuity between being and beings.

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[23] *De pot.* 7.2.9.
[24] *ST* 1.8.1.
[25] *De pot.* 7.2.9.
[26] *Met.* 11.3.

4. Being "in Contradiction" and Contradiction "in Being": Subsistence as Telos

Being cannot cling to itself as being in the "ideal horizon" of the ontological vacillation. If finite reason fixes it within this horizon, being contradicts itself as a "substantialized," infinite actuality next to God. But it is not self-contradiction that sends hypostasized being into its finite or infinite subsistence. If we were to make this claim, we would fail to see it is only the infinite positivity of Ipsum Esse Subsistens that sets the contradiction into sharp speculative relief. Indeed, any experience of being that takes being as in some way existing for itself, and does not perceive it according to its pouring forth from God, never understands being in its nonsubsistence and thus cannot avoid making it a substance. This is the great danger that besets Heideggerian thought.

The whole difficulty lies in the speculative determination of being's self-mediation. If we do not risk the venturing forth into the dimension of being as being, wherein being is necessarily experienced as "nothing," then the finite closes itself into a factically posited res, which is no longer mediated and must be conceived exclusively as a result of the divine will's positing. It may at first seem that the only way to lead the inseity of substance into the mediation of a "living," concrete identity, which would allow us to see the "to be" as manifest, not in a static essence, but in operation [*Vollzug*], is to introduce speculative contradiction into it. But this takes for granted that being has already been submerged in the subsisting res.

It is not finite reason as subject, however, that first drives being out of the res and into the dimension in which being is unable to cling to itself, and so enters onto the path out of the contradiction and into the res that is now coming to, and arriving beyond, mediation [*zur Ver-mittlung kommende*]. The posited substance itself, as we will come to see, can never fully leave behind the dimension of the revealedness of being [*Offenbarkeit des Seins*]. The apparent speculative necessity of the contradiction in being results from the twofold congealing of being in the res and in the ontological vacillation, for the unmediated res implies that being "clings to itself" as being, and this in turn leads to an unmediated res. In this case, the reality and ideality[27] of being fall apart from one another; this became clear in modern metaphysics, which therefore also proves to have had its roots in the speculative contradiction. What corresponds to substantialized being as being and the factical res is a positivity of God that has not yet been raised up to its absolute fullness. This was, in general terms, the situation in which Greek metaphysics stood, in which the finite was not yet absolutely mediated as finite in God. At the origin of modern thought, however, lies a grappling with an otherness that continued to determine God from the outside, which we saw in Greek metaphysics; the attempt was made to free this metaphysics from the status of natura lapsa on the basis of the theological a priori. The aim was to break open the rigid res that was closed in on itself and against God—Scotus had his eyes on Aristotle's causae secundae.[28] But in the speculative act, which now draws its strength from the assumption of revelation as an a priori given, reason takes for granted this self-enclosed res as its starting point, so that the following triad becomes normative for the process of "sublation": (1) the *res* (in itself); (2) *self-withholding being*—that is, a notion of being that refuses to empty itself—and the theological correlate of this, namely, man's disobedience with respect to God himself or in other words the "status" of a Logos that has "not yet" emptied himself; and (3) *God*, interpreted as not yet having revealed himself as self-giving love that presupposes "nothing" outside of itself. As we sought to show above, this triad therefore implies the speculative contradiction, which was made possible by the theological a priori that was introduced in order to ensure the sublation of the finite in the infinite.

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[27] Here it becomes apparent once again that the power of contradiction irrupts whenever the bonum (we spoke about the bonitas divina, in which the necessary sense of being has its roots) falls away from the speculative view and becomes submerged into the fragments of either reality or ideality.

This concept of being took for granted, from the outset, that the finite, precisely by being *finite*, was a res barricaded against God, and thus that the structure of participation made the ens fundamentally something that needed to be overcome.[29] Because being was thus stuck inside of the res, mediating grace was *forced* to take its place[30]—Scotus and Suarez in this sense fundamentally prepared the way for Protestant theology. This grace, from the beginning, thus had no other place to unfold itself but within the medium of essentialized being and of the contradiction. We thus see the history of thought that unveils itself in the temptations that confront us along our speculative journey.[31]

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[28] Cf. *Op. Ox.* 1.2.1. u. 2. It is only in the negation of the negation of the intractable finite that God then later acquires the *potest in quodcumque possibile immediate*, which Scotus already grappled with (cf. *Quodl.* 7.12).

[29] The same thing holds, of course, for the natural faculties: "When I call it [the faculty] natural, I am speaking of it in its fallen condition," as Scotus says in *Op. Ox. Prol.* 1.2.13.

[30] Cf. the author's "Inwiefern ist die Konstruktion," especially chapters 1 and 2.

If we truly take the "to be" seriously, however, then we have to say that finite reason determines the contradiction in a speculative way, not by solidifying "to be" next to God, but rather demonstrating it "according to the diffusion of its very processions"[32] out of God and thus in its nonsubsistence.

What is at issue for being is its existing-ness [*Seiend-sein*], insofar as it is participated in by entities "according to the diffusion of its very processions" out of God. But because it is only an existing thing that is called an *in se esse habens*, "namely, the substance, which subsists," what is at issue in "to be" as act in its existing-ness is subsistence.

If we experience the absolute positivity of Ipsum Esse Subsistens—i.e., God—then being unveils itself as "nothing," as we have shown. But this "nothing" makes it impossible to project being's coming to subsistence [*Subsistenzbewegung*] into God as a mirror image of what happens in finite being. To do so would be to think that, in the movement into subsistence, by which "to be" achieves existing-ness, God too would come to himself by crossing the difference between himself and ipsum esse; it would, in other words, be to make God an absolute substance in the sense of an "infinite entity." This would represent God as a causa sui, which Thomas rejects when he says, "It is more true to say that God is above all entity than to say that he is entity" (*De nat. gen.*, chap. 1).

This "onto-theo-logical constitution of metaphysics" (Heidegger)[33] has its roots in the freezing of an indifferent ens qua ens at the level of the speculative contradiction. To freeze being in this way means that reason, empowered by the negation of negation that occurred in God's absolute self-communication in revelation—that is, empowered by the transnihilation of the finite in the total reduction of the finite to its origin in the sense of a radical affirmation—places itself in the absolute beginning of all speculative enfolding, in which the being that no longer clings to itself exchanges itself for the "nothing." This position allows reason, which has been enflamed by contradiction, to posit the absolute substance of God at the level of the infinite, and posit the finite substance at the level of the finite. Thought cannot undertake to begin in the sphere of *ens ut sic* without turning contradiction into an absolute that takes the place of being itself.

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[31] It is not always possible at each speculative step to indicate the historical concretization of what we have described as they have in fact occurred.

[32] *ST* 1.75.5.1.

[33] Cf. Joan Stambaugh, trans., *Identity and Difference* (New York: Harper, 1969), 42*ff*.

The form that such a step takes in Hegel is the claim that nothing may precede speculation "other than the entire presuppositionlessness of everything," while this presuppositionlessness is nothing other than reason's absolute position in the vacillation of being. In this case, the only thing left over for thought would be its "absolute simplicity" (esse as completem et simplex!). Hegel therefore says, "Strictly speaking, this requirement is fulfilled by the freedom that abstracts from everything, and grasps its own pure abstraction, the simplicity of thinking—in the resolve *of the will to think purely*," as he puts it in the introduction to his *Encyclopedia*.[34]

But it makes no sense for speculation to come to rest in the absolute contradiction of being. Such coming to rest presupposes that the contradiction has already made being as being into an abstract fixed quantity, wherein even God falls under the dialectic of the contradiction. In this moment, however, everything is already absolutely decided regarding reason's speculative endeavor on the basis of hypostasized being in such a way that this endeavor is already fundamentally "presupposed" in substantialized being: philosophizing speculation has in this way forfeited any genuine presuppositionlessness.

The simplicity of thinking thus consists in obedience to the "necessary sense of being" ("esse est similitudo divinae *bonitatis*"), by virtue of which the *exinanitio* of being relieves the distress of the contradiction into which thinking repeatedly falls, and interprets the difference between being and beings. The contradiction, which finite reason cannot avoid positing to the extent that it arrests being next to God—though it is never in fact able to leave the situation of crisis behind itself on its own!—has therefore always already been decided. By contrast, when thought abstracts in a pure way, through an act of freedom, in which it grasps its simplicity and its universal presuppositionlessness, it ends up in the absolute contradiction.

By accepting the poverty of finitude, of the "little way"—that is, the path on which reason always already finds itself—reason unmasks the presumptuous "simplicity of the beginning." By following out this path, reason empties itself in obedience to nonsubsisting being. In the sacrifice of this kenosis, however, God's absolute loving presence shines out, and its light makes manifest the impotence of the hypostasis of being.

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[34] Hegel, *Encyclopedia Logic* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), 124, §78 Remark.

5. Contradiction and Being's Movement into Subsistence: The Identity of Being

There is a profound connection between the experience of the contradiction that results when being is placed "next to God" and the theme of being's coming to itself in the movement into subsistence. Being *is* God "or" finite beings. This "or," however, is not to be understood in terms of a speculative horizon that embraces both God and the finite.

Conversely, it is also not the case that the dynamic of the beginning springs from the "place of contradiction," which this speculative horizon would first have to break open.

Being seeks itself as being [*ist auf sich selbst als Sein aus*], insofar as, speculatively (!) speaking, it "obeys" its governing sense and "is" itself, that is, is in substantial unity with itself. But this coming to itself on the one hand harbors the danger of the twofold false continuation of being and beings; on the other hand, to say that being comes to itself seems to take for granted that being started out as not being "at home with itself," a presupposition that would harden the convertibility of being and "nothing" into an absolute beginning; that is, it would make the *coming to be* of the arrival into a result by sublating the contradiction. At this point, we are deep in conversation with Hegel.

Although it is for lack of a better term, we nevertheless wish to attempt to interpret the difference between being and beings as an event of "the movement into subsistence," insofar as it is only substance that can be called *simpliciter ens*. Being, accordingly, "aims" at its subsistence, precisely to the extent that it seeks itself. Because being is participated in by creatures according to the outpouring of its emanation from God, and this emanation from God at the same time never "takes place" outside of God, the emanating being has always already been sublated into the absolutely simple positivity of God, without God being for all that subject to a process of becoming. The ontological difference is always already "achieved" ["*getan*"] as difference in God in the "mode" ["*Weise*"] of God according to the phrase *In Deo omnia Deus*, "Everything in God is God."[35] If we take a more precise look at the "sublation" of being in its coming to itself, it becomes apparent that being as being *is* "nothing" insofar as it is the "other" with respect to God, because God, in the pouring out of the emanation of being, does not empty himself into another, which he himself *is* not. But if God does indeed pour himself out "in" ["*im*"] being, then what is "*poured out*" "*is*" always already what God is not, because God is always already what he is, namely, ipsum esse subsistens.

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[35] Being does not acquire difference in the first place as something added to it from the outside, nor does being release it from itself outside of God. On this point, Thomas says, "Now God could not be said to know himself perfectly unless he knew all the ways in which his own perfection can be shared by others. Neither could he know the very nature of being perfectly, unless he knew all modes of being"—as if esse sufficed as completum et simplex, in which everything "is" already simply unfolded. "Hence it is manifest that God knows all things with proper knowledge, in their distinction from each other" (*ST* 1.14.6). This

Now, the identity of being thus unveils itself to us in this coming to itself. In the identity of being, the decision between "God or creature" has always already absolutely been made and being is always already absolutely at one with itself—that is, it is itself—on the basis of the act of the movement into subsistence.

This ought not to be understood in the sense that God's absolute identity and the creature's finite identity came to a decision at the transcendental level of contradiction. The difference between being and beings, as we will go on to interpret it, has to be sublated in the absolute identity of God *as difference*, so that being's arrival at itself in the "finite subsistence," which thus actualizes the difference between being and beings, illuminates difference in the absolute identity of God without God himself being dissolved into the processuality of coming to himself.

If finite reason speculatively holds on to the dimension of being as being and if it experiences it as contradiction, then reason at the same time brings to light that this "contradiction" and the difference that it implies rests on being's identity with itself. Only because God is absolutely himself is the ipsum esse nonsubsistent. And because the finite, as ens, is always already itself in a certain manner that cannot be determined in relation to God by means of the *maior dissimilitudo*, esse praeter omnes res exists only in intellectu, that is, as both completum et simplex and non subsistens at the same time.

If one were therefore to say that being contradicts itself within its ideal horizon and cannot cling to itself therein, then this "contradiction" arises for finite reason from being's identity with itself, precisely insofar as it always already *is* God—or creature. The *decisive point* is whether reason keeps from coming to a rest in the contradiction, whether it avoids making contradic-

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distinctio results, however, from the complete "measurement" ["*Durchmessen*"] of being on the basis of the ontological difference (!) and not on the basis of the fragmentation of being as being into "participated parts." For this reason, Aquinas says, "We must therefore hold that God knows things other than himself with a proper knowledge; not only insofar as being is common to them, but insofar as one is distinguished from the other" (*ST* 1.14.6).

tion the energy of identity and determines identity absolutely on the basis of contradiction.

If the finite's identity with itself is what allows the speculative foregrasp into the dimension of being as being and along with this the experience of the ontological difference, and then through it the speculative determination of the convertibility of being and "nothing," then the unfolding of the "movement towards subsistence" is so to speak reason's "return trip" ["*Rückweg*"] from its foregrasp into being as being and as such the interpretation of the finite identity of being, which is now shown to be something that passes back and forth "through" the ontological difference. This interpretation can only be carried out if thinking opens itself constantly in "listening obedience" ["*hörig*"] to the origin—that is, to the identity of subsisting being as being—or in other words to the difference in the absolute identity of God. This difference bursts open being's hypostasizing itself over against God. If God, by contrast, were an absolute and infinite block of essence, he would have to posit a being that is closed up in itself, since he would take back into himself every gift he has given, and his absolute self-mediation would fail to shine out in the ontological difference. This is the truth that Thomas has in mind when he writes, "this distinction (of the divine hypostases) excels every distinction in the order of dignity and causality, and similarly relation, which is the principle of distinction, excels in dignity every difference in creatures, not to be sure because it is a relation but because it is a divine relation. It excels, moreover, in causality too, since the procession and multiplication [!] of creatures is caused by the procession of the different divine Persons" (1 *Sent.* 26.2.2.2).

6. The Movement into Subsistence as *Via in Ens* in Thought's Temptation: First Glance at the Relationship between Time and Being

It is clear that the movement into subsistence, as the "path" being follows into its existing-ness [*sein Seiend-sein*], is not a motus. When we read that "ens simply put is that which has esse in itself, namely, substance"[36] or "ens is said, as it were, to be that which has esse, and *this itself alone is the substance* that subsists,"[37] then this "path to subsistence" is nothing other than the enactment in reverse [*Rückvollzug*] of the dimension of the *esse habens* that has been opened up in the speculative grasping out toward being as being—that is, of the ontological difference—in which the participation in being exposits itself. We are thus asking how the *esse habens* comes to take its *stand* [*zu-stande kommt*] from "out" of the dimension of the ipsum esse non subsistens and into the concrete subsistere of the finite ens and its relative identity with itself.

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[36] *Met.* 11.3.
[37] *Met.* 12.1.

The movement into subsistence circumscribes the entire dimension of the esse habens, being's nonlinear coming to itself, which is not initiated by contradiction and terminates in the substance, "because the complete ratio entis is found in it."[38] But if the *ratio entis* is unveiled in the substance, then it will be unfolded in what it is, namely, out of being's movement into subsistence, which means at the same time in the *return* of spirit, which is capax *entis*, to itself in its concrete subsistence.

Now, a great temptation befalls us once again at this point, for "motion is not a complete being, but is a *via in ens*, a path into being."[39] Can being's coming to itself be described as a motion of this sort? Can we call this being, which is convertible with "nothing," an ens in-completum, which is now in via to its subsistence insofar as it is en route to itself as ens? Is the movement into subsistence not this path of the movement of the *esse in-completum* on the *via in ens* to ens completum, which is an esse habens?[40]

If in any event what is meant here is the ontological essence of motion, in which time unfolds, then we have to ask whether being and time are ultimately identical. If they were, being would on the one hand proceed from time insofar as the form of time [*Zeitgestalt*] is nothing other than the form of motion, and therefore nothing other than the driving ground of being that "comes toward" [*zukommenden*] the ens. In this sense, it would indeed be futural ["*zu-künftigen*"], even while, "in" the ens, it has always already *been* ["*gewesenen*"] as the *past*. On the other hand, time would proceed from being insofar as we interpreted the movement into subsistence as a motus and *via in ens*.

This seems to open up for us the possibility of a fruitful engagement with

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38. *De IV Opp.* II.7.

39. 4 *Sent.* 1.1.4b.

40. Movement is in fact in this sense futural [*zu-künftig*]—"It always needs something in the future in order to perfect its species" (4 *Sent.* 17.1.5c.1)—for that which is called "temporal" is what "needs some future thing to complete its species" (*De ver.* 8.14.12). What is at issue here is therefore an "inclination to act" (*In VIII. Phys.* lect. 10).

this problematic, which we will formulate in Part A, chapter VII, on ontological spatiotemporality. It will become apparent there that the dangerous temptations of thought that we must withstand can nevertheless teach us a great deal.

We are already able to say, however, that to speak of being's movement into subsistence is never to suggest that an ens in-completum follows a path into its subsistence, *because* esse is no ens, but rather a non-subsistens; however, esse also indicates a completum et simplex, and therefore not an in-completum, since nothing can be added to it that would be external to it. We would grasp the movement into subsistence as a motus only if to be as the highest sublation of the ens takes on the character of the fact of existing [*Seiendheit*] and therefore is no longer conceived strictly as *actus quasi primus*.[41] In the *motus*, to be would then be established as a purely entitative transition; in other words, it would be taken as something that has ultimately always already been submerged in the ens (in the "past"). As *ens* in-completum, being would in a certain sense "have been," in advance, that from which and toward which the movement into subsistence opens itself, namely, the ens. The motus would thus have brought us simply into the twofold false continuation of esse into the ens, and vice versa.

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[41] "'To be' does not express the kind of act which is an operation passing over into something external to be produced in time, but rather the act that is so to speak primary" (*De ver.* 23.4.7). We refer here to the chapter in which he discusses *esse as prima rerum creatarum*. In this treatment, Thomas invites suspicion that he has hypostasized being. The repeated emphasis of the *actus quasi primus*, however, occurs precisely in contrast to a substantializing of being. The point here is, rather, to avoid the danger of a linear-logicizing extension of being into the ens, wherein the ontological difference would collapse into an identity that was perfectly transparent to reflexive reason.

IV

The Crisis of Being and Its Exposition [*Auslegung*] in the Difference between Being and Beings

1. The Movement into Subsistence and the Ontological Difference

Because the movement into subsistence has its beginning in the convertibility of being and "nothing," the movement has always already superseded this "beginning" in the positively existing entity and "sublated" it; even though the entity results from the enactment of the difference, the beginning as such, because it can never be hypostasized, is itself in turn always already the "result" of reason's speculative foregrasp, which reaches out from the concrete entity.

This brings thinking to the great temptation to subsume the result of the "beginning" within the entity's absolute reflection and to abandon being's unfolding in the movement into subsistence, since reason seems to be able to determine the beginning on the basis of the *concrete entity* precisely by obeying being's nonsubsistence. After all, the concretion of the res comes as a result of being's nonsubsistence.

But this implies in turn that to be can be *determined* in the reflection of the essence alone, that the essence in other words "determines" being—that is, receives and limits it—in its *concrete subsistence*, as we will see below. The opening of the ontological difference or the movement into subsistence would in this case be mediated exclusively through the posited essence. Thus being would be related "to essence as the unmediated to the mediated,"[1] "its (the essence's) movement constitutes the transition of being into the concept,"[2] that is, the transition of the res as it is in itself into the sublation that has opened for it in the subject through the opening of the ontological difference. But in this case, the speculative enactment of the ontological difference has failed; what has been carried out is only a logicizing continuation, which acquires an ostensible nonessentiality, a disengagement from the res, only in the whirl of contradiction. But if, by contrast, the movement into subsistence is enacted, then the speculative act of reason always already stands within the difference between being and beings, wherein it must make the fundamental scope of being's living actuality its own.

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[1] Hegel, "Logik für die Mittelklasse," Einleitung §6, *I. Texte zur Philosophischen Propädeutik*, in *Nürnberger und Heidelberger Schriften 1808–1817* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2008).

The movement into subsistence that brings being into "identity" with itself does not obliterate the ontological difference. The point is simply that we have to experience the ontological difference principially "in" the identity of being. The "beginning" as result (of the speculative foregrasp) and the finite being that results from the "beginning" (of the circumincession of being and "nothing") cannot be set off against one another in a difference that has already been closed. Being itself in this case would have left its *exinanitio* (non subsistens!) definitively behind, and the dialectic of contradiction would simply be what first drives being's self-enclosed "always-already-having-been-substance" into mediation. It is therefore not the positing of being and beings as the fixed termini of the movement into subsistence that allows the speculative mediation of being's identity. Identity is therefore not a trait that inheres in being, that is, a quality "inside" of being. No, being as *non subsistens* stands itself within the trait of identity. Self-identity is what sustains being in its circumincession with the "nothing" (non subsistens).

Being's identity therefore does not have its origin in the contradiction of the interchangeability of being and "nothing." The contradiction of being does not sublate itself by its own forces in the identity of being. This would be the reversal of the reason that identified itself with being in order, through thought, to dissolve being's contradiction in the mediated identity with itself. Thus the identity is not a trait *in* being, which would then ultimately gather itself together and fix itself in the existing entity—which is called a being because of the "to be"—that "comes into its own" ["*ereigneten*"]. If identity does have its start here, there remains no way to avoid the contradiction that comes with positing an absolute beginning for philosophical speculation. But because the "contradiction as beginning" took the substantializing of being praeter res for granted, which implies the complete swallowing up of being into the subject—or, in other words, the exhaustive conceptualization of being, as its condition of possibility—then the substance, as a "factical," isolated res remains outside of the subject, in mere abstract identity, which means self-enclosed in a univocal and unmediated way. Thus neither infinite nor finite identity begins with contradiction; otherwise, identity would be the relation of being in contradiction to being "in" the absolute or relative identity with itself as entity! But the relative identity would also thereby eliminate itself precisely as relative identity of the finite as finite. It would be able to posit itself only ever in a provisional way, in order immediately to sublate itself on the basis of its "beginning" (contradiction), in order to drive being's movement into subsistence along this path *ad infinitum*. This infinite progress would then be "superseded" only by means of the fact that reason, as *capax entis*, in refusing to obey the necessary sense of being, has itself already left the movement of subsistence behind as a "thing of the past" by preemptively substantializing the *ipsum esse*.

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[2] Hegel, *The Science of Logic* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1969), 391 [translation slightly modified].

2. The Crisis of Being and the Decision of the Movement into Subsistence

We call the "beginning" of the speculative unfolding of the difference between being and beings the "crisis of being," insofar as the convertibility of being and "nothing" in the concrete substance, which has always already superseded this movement through God's positive positing [*positive Setzung*], comes to a decision in it.

The movement into subsistence thereby not only circumscribes the ontological difference between being and beings, but also and at the same time it sets this difference forth *in the concrete substance*.[3] The movement is for this reason nothing other than the progressive unfolding of the *esse habens*, of the entity or concrete substance, so that the vertical ontological difference once again comes into focus in an original way within the horizontal dimension of the concrete self-actualization of the finite substance, that is, in its externalizing self-exhibition (appearance) and its internalizing return to itself. This speculative endeavor is entirely legitimate insofar as we never forget that all the "phases" of this exposition of being-as-coming-to-itself are *superseded* by the being that is always already subsisting in identity with itself and that they are nevertheless not for all that mere fabrications of reason, insofar as *esse* (!) … *est actus subsistentis*.[4]

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[3] Cf. E. Gilson: "In order to obtain a correct view of Thomist ontology, all one needs to do is extend to the notion of being as being all of the conclusions that hold for each substance in particular." *L'Etre et L'Essence* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1948), 117.

Our question now is: what "phases" does being pass through in "arriving at itself"? We can put this question properly only if we take constant care to eliminate all "motion," any false extension of being into beings, and allow the motion to be sublated in the "necessary sense of being." This sense makes manifest that, insofar as the convertibility of being and "nothing" comes to a decision in it, the crisis of being can never be neutralized in the pseudo-subsistence of the *ens indifferens*, and being can never be depotentiated into a potency that is able to receive determination, which means in this context reduced to a mere concept.

The necessary sense of being affirms being both as a completum et simplex in the sense of infinite actuality, and as the nonsubsistence of the same. It can justly be said, sit venia verbo, that the necessary sense of being *transnihilates* being in the ideal vacillation and unveils its exinanitio. But being is always what it is on the basis of this nihilation, and, precisely in the apparent impotence of its expropriation into finitude, it reveals its infinite positivity to the thinking of mere understanding that seeks to grasp onto stable fixed quantities. In this "poverty," which is the ultimate seal of its fullness, being calls reason to obedience [*Seinsgehorsam*], in which the wealth of being opens up to it. By contrast, the being that clings to itself and affirms itself in the calculated wealth of the all-comprehensive vacillation collapses into the abject state of the merely rationally posited *ens rationis*: "praeter omnes res existentes: nisi in intellectu solum."[5]

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[4] 1 *Sent.* 8.3.3. exp. text. The mediated subsisting of being in the concrete, finite substance is and always remains also the "basis" of the speculative foregrasp of being as being: "Just as esse, according to our way of understanding (*secundum rationem intelligendi*), follows from (*consequitur*) the principles of the ens itself as if from a cause; so too the measure of an entity is related to the measure of esse in terms of causality" (1 *Sent.* 19.2.2.3).

[5] Cf. *SCG* 1.26. If we may be permitted, this metaphysical experience can be elaborated in theological terms in light of the life of Jesus. The tempter encounters him in the desert and says, "If you are the Son of God, then … " In other words, "Is it really necessary for you, here and now, to take upon yourself the impotence and abject condition of human existence?" Satan tempts Jesus to withdraw into his divinity, to which Jesus does not cling as "something to be grasped." This is the temptation to lordship on the basis of the "clinging-to-oneself" in divinity against the exinanitio of the form of the slave. It would be important

The "crisis of being" stands in the power of the necessary sense of being. It shows that being is always already positively itself as the *similitudo divinae bonitatis*. But the way in which it "arrives at itself" occurs along the "path" upon which speculative reason sublates the contradiction and thus dehypostasizes the ideal vacillation of being. If being is the highest likeness of God in its nonsubsistence, then it is on this basis always already transnihilated and positively itself as a completum et simplex without being handed over to this transnihiliation beforehand in a surreptitious clinging to itself: "nam ens simpliciter dicitur id quod in se habet esse, scilicet *substantia*."[6] What we have here is therefore not a pneumatic reason, which posits the transnihilation of being on its own in order to demonstrate the impotence of its nonsubsistence in the bloody baptism of the "speculative Good Friday" (Hegel)!

3. The Temptation That Arises in the Unfolding of the Movement into Subsistence

A dual uncertainty thus befalls thinking in the speculative foregrasp of being as being. On the one hand, a danger arises for thinking that it will come to a standstill "in" something "primordial" [*einem "Ursprünglichen"*] that does not subsist. Thus we face the temptation simply to forego carrying out the speculative *excessus* into being. We ask ourselves: What point would there be to reflect on this "completum et simplex, *sed non subsistens*"? Does it make any sense to call the concrete entity a "being" on the basis of such a "nothing," which exchanges itself for being? Can one even say "Hoc nomen ens imponitur ab ipso esse"[7] and "ens sumitur ab actua essendi"?[8] Why make the philosophical effort to call the various existing things we see around us—the stars, flowers, children, and so forth—"beings" on the basis of such a "nothing"?

But if we come to a standstill within the sphere of the "crisis of being,"

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above all to think through this connection in the Gospels as a whole: the grain of wheat must die, the talents must increase. The law is brought to perfection in love, which does not remain the "other," as the law must always necessarily do, in relation to man's self-actualization, but as freely given gift is able to empty itself and become man—not "ultimately" taken back into a hypostasized "clinging to oneself" but truly emptied out, "transnihilated," one of us, to such an extent that he calls himself the "Son of Man." Cf. also Irenaus, *Against Heresies*, bk. V (PG 7, 1180/1181): "As to those words [of His enemy], 'If thou be the Son of God,' [the Lord] made no remark; but by thus acknowledging His human nature He baffled His adversary, and exhausted the force of his first attack by means of His Father's word.... He both revealed him by this name, and showed [at the same time] who He Himself was."

[6] *Met.* 11.3.

[7] *Met.* 4.2.

[8] *De ver.* 1.1c.

then we ask whether it is possible for us to constitute and thoughtfully circumscribe such a horizon of being "for itself" without allowing thinking to usurp a realm in which it is constantly exposed or forced to succumb to the temptation to heave this *intimum* of the entity into the vacillation of pseudo-subsistence and, on the basis of an originary will to power, to subordinate all beings to the subject's "perfecting will"—if only we can come to "take possession of" the originating source of all acts and perfections, even if only in the form of a mere concept—for the "esse est actualitas omnium actuum et propter hoc est perfectio omnium perfectionum."[9]

The temptation constantly lures thinking by means of an ultimate metaphysical "ambiguity"; if finite reason has let itself be taken in by the previously experienced and sketched temptations, it will think it is always actually "in the right" when it sticks to its own path.

It thus seems legitimate to give up the speculative persistence in being, for, after all, being *is* in fact "nothing"—just as it seems justified to constitute a subsisting "ideal horizon," because being represents a completum et simplex, and we may either unfold this speculatively or allow the finite to be mediated in the infinite.

We will have to consider later which path thinking ends up following, which metaphysical forks the concrete and historical act of thinking discovers in the road once reason has come to a standstill within the horizon of being's vacillation. The moment this happens, the place of the speculative unfolding of being turns into an absolute control center that produces beings and their truth in a rationalistic and technological manner. In other words, what we have in this case is a production of beings in a "second-order" movement into subsistence, which presents an uncanny analogy to being's legitimate ("first") movement into subsistence, so that man's originally subsisting world gets eclipsed or even absorbed by the technologistic world of the "second" order that this "second" movement into subsistence produces: because the "ratio entis ab actu essendi sumitur ... esse autem est actus essendi." Moreover, what occurs here is also a "production" of truth, because "the being of things causes the truth in the intellect."[10]

But because being does not subsist, it has really handed itself over to beings. Because it holds "nothing" back, it enables reason to reach out into it in a radical way precisely on the basis of the finite. Being does not reveal its wealth by clinging to itself, just as the gift that has truly been given to the recipient, as it releases him into his own proper independence, moves the recipient toward the giver as origin and makes the giver's fullness and positivity manifest.[11]

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[9] *De pot.* 7.2.9.
[10] *ST* 1.16.2.3.

4. The Movement into Subsistence and the Sublation of the Ontological Difference in God's Absolute Identity

The "path back" from the crisis into the enactment of the movement into subsistence is not "left to the finite" alone. Thomas says, "the relation to its cause does not enter into the definition of a thing that is caused," and he draws the inference: "if something is called a being by virtue of participation then it follows that it is caused by an other."[12] But being caused by another is not ascribed to being insofar as it is being, or else all being would be caused by another.[13] For this reason, even the participation in being, in which being caused unfolds, does not occur in such a way that being comes to an absolute standstill in the dimension of the *finite* entity's participation in being itself, even though "to be" does not subsist and therefore is always already a concrete finite entity. Speculative reason only too easily abandons the completum et simplex so radically to transnihilation that the "nothing" is turned into the root of participation. For this reason, "nihilism" always implies the hardening of the entity into a monadic res on the one hand and, on the other, the dissolution of esse into a merely rational conceptual horizon in such a way that it is no longer discovered in reason's foregrasp.[14] In this case, being collapses into "pure, absolutized finitude."[15] The proper experience of the circumincession of being and "nothing," by contrast, always opens participation up beyond itself and shows that this *very circumincession* provides participation with its condition of possibility.

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[11] It should be evident that the entire problematic concerning the independence of the causae secundae lies implicit in the crisis of being. As we can see in any false Augustinianism, the depotentiating of the finite always goes hand in hand with the hypostasizing of being, with the gift's clinging to itself under the banner of *soli Deo gloria*, wherein God is depotentiated to the very same extent because the anti-divinity of the infinite, substantialized *ens indifferens* has established itself in juxtaposition to him. It is only because being thus holds sway in reason as a general conceptio entis that we fail to see here the resurrection of the gnostic anti-god. But even this flatters calculating reason, since it is now called to enable the God who has been depotentiated by his Other to come back to life, insofar as it brings the being set over against God now into transnihilation in the fire of contradiction and thereby "sets God free."

[12] *ST* 1.44.1.1.

[13] *SCG.* 2.52, and he says in this same passage, "we would thus have to proceed to infinity in causes, which is impossible. Therefore, no caused being is its own 'to be.'" We will return to this profound affirmation later, when we reflect on the relationship between "participation and causality."

[14] We ought to reflect for a moment on the way "nihilism" emerges from late scholastic essentialism!

[15] It is disturbing to see that, precisely when one emphasizes the ens indifferens over against absolutized finitude as the horizon that mediates the finite to the infinite, one falls victim to the total inclusion of being in "finite participation" by means of the hypostasizing fixation of *ipsum esse*, and, contrary to one's intention, falls under the sway of "absolute finitude."

The crisis of being therefore does not yet come to an end in "pure finitude," because "to be" *is* itself prior to any coming to itself, and thus it is manifestly true that being caused by another cannot be ascribed to being insofar as it is being. The participation in being always already transcends itself. This is why even the ontological difference, in which this causal event sets itself forth, lies beyond itself, hidden, as difference (!), in God's absolute identity. *As movement*, it "discloses" God's absolute identity in the movement of an absolute difference, but not in the form of a mirror image. For this would require a fixed speculative "mediator" between God and the finite, and even God himself would fall under the category of "being caused," having his place inside the twofold exposition of the difference *as a causal event* [*Kausalvollzug*], which moves in the direction of both the infinite and the finite. The possibility of sublating difference in the absolute then comes to naught.

Reason now runs into the great temptation to negate the sublation of difference in God in order thereby to overcome the positing of divine self-mediation as absolute substance by means of the explication of "finite" difference. But every thinking of being that defers, so to speak, this sublation of participation in God in order thereby to open itself to the sending and the address of the "godly God" in his revelation and "to await him" finds itself in the uncanny danger of juxtaposing the *non subsistens* to being itself in this "expectant waiting," to defer the transnihilation of esse to the always already subsisting res and thus to hypostasize being. In other words, thinking fears that the radical drive toward subsistence would give so much emphasis to the sublation of participation in God that the absolute would inevitably be defined as *Summum Ens*, and thinking would begin to collapse into the "onto-theo-logical constitution" of metaphysics. When the expectant waiting is so radicalized that God's address is "not yet permitted" to be given with being itself, then the dimension of being as being must necessarily be kept open for the possible arrival of the Word of God. This is legitimate in principle, since the Word of God cannot be deduced simply from the givenness of being. On the other hand, this is just where the uncanny temptation arises to neutralize being in its "nonsubsistence" (!) and by so doing to evade the question whether God has not already "*concretely*" (!) spoken his Word to us. This *non subsistens*, if it is taken seriously by speculation, points directly to the concrete ens and thus immediately to the epiphany of the divine Word in the world of beings as something that has possibly already come to pass as a historical event [*Ereignis*].[16] Thus the concern to "open up" beings to being can lead to the temptation to ultimate disobedience in the sense of a radical rejection of history. The opening of the ontological difference occurs properly—that is, in obedience to being—only on the basis of the prior experience of God's absolute identity, in which finite difference [*endliche Differenz*] in God ... is God himself. It is only here that we can overcome the danger of an "onto-theo-logical" entrapment of God within the ontological difference. Already here we catch sight of the theological a priori of the thinking of being. But we will need to reflect more profoundly on this at a later point.

Let us allow the matter to draw us further along! In Part A, chapter III, in the section "The Elucidation of the Origins of the Convertibility of Being and 'Nothing,'" we tried to show that being, as *completum et simplex*, exchanges itself for its *non subsistens* because nothing can be extrinsic to being other than nonbeing. Being is not participated in as something separate from God, and it exchanges itself for the "nothing" by virtue of God's absolute loving intimacy with his creature. For this reason, the movement of subsistence does not unfold itself in the finite and the infinite in the same manner, in such a way that the various finite substances would stand over against the highest being, "God." Yet the dynamic of God's absolute self-communication is not due to the ontological difference. If it were, it would mean that God shows himself to be God precisely by rescinding and closing the difference between "to be" and what is, which is to say that he exhibits himself by means of finite reason in the absolute concept.

Because everything actual causes something similar to itself, the ground of the possibility of the ontological difference lies hidden in God. Since "*difference itself is a certain being*,"[17] the ground of the possibility of the ontological difference must be sublated in God's absolute actuality in the *actuality of a difference*.

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[16] It is worth reflecting, here, on the question of why Greek metaphysics, like the Old Testament existential constitution of the people of God, was necessarily unable to overcome the hypostasizing of being (which we sought to show briefly in outline with respect to Greek metaphysics) on the basis of their hope structure, which pointed to the "fullness of time" in the incarnation of the Logos. God was not yet experienced in the absolute positivity of love, that is, in his freely given self-communication in faith. Even the love *propter mandatum Domini* does not lead to the freedom of the children of God, since it so to speak has the element of its self-movement still "outside of itself." When this negation is negated by the love effected by the Holy Spirit, love is released in its most profound reality as a source "that streams forth into eternal life." This is why Thomas says of the free human being: "He avoids evil because it is evil ... and not simply because God commands it" (cf. *In II Cor.* 3.3). The salvation-historical situation of the Old Testament comes to pass in the same being, which is "as yet still" substantialized, just as it is in the essence metaphysics of the Greeks, although Jerusalem ought not to be identified with Athens! Modern metaphysics has once again fallen into a similar situation by virtue of its theological presuppositions.

Whoever denies this has to deny at the same time that things participate in being in its outpouring or procession *out of God*. If being, as what is participated in, is nevertheless detached from God, then we necessarily posit a pseudo-subsistence and thus trap being in the res, which is "willed" by the absolute will that bridges the abyss of nothingness between God and beings. Ultimately, the only possibility left over in this case is to unfold participation in "absolute finitude," in which being itself falls under the definition of being caused and the participation in being gets eliminated.

5. The Theological A Priori in the Pseudo-Speculative Unfolding of Difference in God

Erich Przywara says in his *Analogia Entis* that we ought "to observe that, even in historical terms, those philosophies of the modern era that seek to be absolute are in fact theologies that have been emptied of theological content."[18] This is precisely the place to work out theologically the dimensions of the difference of ipsum esse in God in order to unmask the theologumena that to a great extent imprison metaphysical thinking, and to overcome them.

We know that the more originally being is experienced as being, the more radically it shows itself as *non subsistens* ("nothing"), and since entities are called *beings* on the basis of being, this experience brings to light ever more radically the negation of the negation—that is, the sublation of the finite in God's absolute positivity—and thus the *ipsum esse subsistens* itself likewise unveils itself.[19] The measure for the intensity of the negation of negation is the intensity of the absolutely positive act of the divine life itself! The impossibility of closing the ontological difference, the uncovering of the false extension of being into beings, and the overcoming of the substantializing of being depend for their a priori possibility on the experience of the self-communication of God's absolute identity, in the mode of the difference that is proper to him. By contrast, the movement into subsistence that is carried out speculatively on the basis of the hypostasized being conceives God necessarily as an absolute essence-block; since *omne agens agit sibi simile*, God's self-communication as infinite love, which does not in any way cling to itself, thus makes possible the dehypostasizing of being. Indeed, it puts to death the vacillation of being. The self-enclosed finite res, the substantialized *ipsum esse,* and God as univocal essence in abstract, unmediated identity (A = A) all imply one another. The hypostasis of being demands as origin a jealous God, who causes a self-withholding being. In this way, God becomes bound to the very thing he himself causes.

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[17] *De pot.* 3.16.3.

[18] *Analogia Entis*, 164.

[19] If the finite is grasped here as the negation of the absolute, this of course does not mean that it is as finite already necessarily secured against God, who would first have to "nihilate" this opposition [*Gegenzug*] by the finite as finite by negating the negation. What would be presupposed in this endeavor would be the identification of being with a monadically self-enclosed *res*.

In the end, what is at issue here is a depotentiating of Deus Pater, a depotentiating that will manifest itself in terms of the ontological difference as the absorption of being into essence. The fate of modern metaphysics is made possible by this "impotence of God's fatherhood." We will attempt to explain briefly what this means.

If the Father is not "able" to divest himself of the entire divine essence to the Son in the Son's procession, then there would remain, so to speak, a "not yet" communicated remainder of the divine essence, which from the perspective of the Son in relation to the Father manifests itself as a remainder of a not yet obtained divine nature. Or, to put it in other words, the divine *essence* is not yet *personally* conveyed by the Father out of mere "abstract identity" with itself. The Son would thus possess the imperfectly mediated divine nature ("not-yet-God") as a negation, which, however, means in relation to the divine nature: as something that is *finite* in itself. The origin (Father) would by the same token be burdened with the negation (impotence) of the *not yet mediated essence*.

Here we have speculatively posited a difference between Father and Son, which perfectly corresponds to the not yet actualized (false!) ontological difference in the sphere of the finite, that is, to the difference between a self-enclosed *res* that is not yet mediated without remainder and its ideality. This ideality unveils itself as a fixed *ipsum esse*, which has not yet accepted without remainder its exchange for the "nothing" and therefore has "not yet" established the "coming-to-itself," the "affirmation-of-itself" in the concrete substance, that is, the negation of its negation (non subsistens). The enactment of this self-affirmation then unveils itself both as the mediation of the *res* and the expulsion of the nothingness (non subsistens) that "still" affects being in its ontological vacillation. In the same way, in God, the expulsion of the finite's nothingness (negation of the negation) that affects the Son implies self-elevation into full participation in the divine nature.[20] At the same time, however, the Father has achieved in the Son's act what he was not "able" to achieve by himself: the divine nature is perfectly mediated, and the Father is enthroned as Lord by the Son. He is freed from imprisonment in the not yet mediated divine nature, the substantial being in itself, and into the personal loving gift of self (*esse* here is *relatio subsistens!*).

God's being affected by finitude, however, was unveiled to us in the self-affirmation of substantialized being next to the abstract infinite nature. Now there occurs the desubstantializing of being and thus the "opening" ["*Eröffnung*"] of the ontological difference, simultaneously with the opening of the absolute difference in God, as the Father's being empowered *by* the Son, in the sublation of the divine nature through the self-communication *to* the Son. In this way, the Logos, burdened with the negation of what is other to God, is hardened into an as-yet unmediated moment of the "beginning" (!) of the negation of the negation, and thus stands in *absolute contradiction*. Because he is the prototype of being (*omnia per ipsum facta sunt*), being as *similitudo dei* corresponds to this "situation" in the inner Trinitarian life. By virtue of his impotence, the Father is the root of this speculative contradiction and is so to speak the one who introduces it. The contradiction of the univocal divine nature that is not yet entirely "grasped" by being (the hypostasis!) is posited in the Father at the "origin" in God, and thus God's Fatherhood is depotentiated. This is the root of all essence metaphysics not only in the modern period, but also in Greek metaphysics, which likewise grapples with the Father.

The Son now divests himself of this abstract fixation; he accepts it, becomes man, and negates in his death and resurrection the negation that had limited him. The "empty being," in its abstract identity as mere completum et simplex *in opposition to* its nonsubsistence likewise accepts this nonsubsistence; it enters into contradiction and dissolves it in the movement into subsistence of its finitization in the concrete *res*. This process enables the Son to take his place, "seated at the right hand of the Father," who has himself become mighty through this act. The Son takes up for himself the uncommunicated divine nature in a countermovement against the impotent Father, in rebellion against him, whereby he enthrones him as Lord—just as in fact the being qua being that is hardened and reduced to potency first "comes to itself," determines itself, in the resolution of the contradiction through reason. Just as the Son ultimately clings to his glory and carries out the pseudo-exinanitio for its sake, so too does being, as fixed hypostasis, ultimately hold on to itself a priori; it is the substantialized field of speculative reason, and it enacts the kenosis and transnihilation only in appearance.

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[20] In this case, to be sure, the finite is already immediately grasped as something that limits God by virtue of its finitude, i.e., something posited over against God and thus conceived in salvation history as having the status of a *natura lapsa*. Contingency is then identified with sin; the salvation-historical path is equated with, and absolutely calculated in terms of, the explication of the finite qua *ens*. Nature and grace converge into one. What radically and definitively safeguards the independence of a metaphysics rooted in the experience of the positivity of being is a theological a priori. When this is lost, no room is left open for a history of grace with nature; as we will see, this problem reveals itself to us as the Holy Spirit's absorption by and bondage to the Logos or, to put it another way, the absolutizing of the vertical dimension of the incarnation.

The medium, however—like the ether in which both the ontological difference of "empty being" unfolds itself in its coming to itself in the finite substance and the self-promoting and self-affirming God unfolds himself—is necessarily that principle in which the Son also liberates himself in the negation of negation, through which he empties himself (et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto!), in order by means of a pseudo-obedience to help the Father to power and dignity: this medium is the Holy Spirit. In the end, the absolute reveals itself as *absolute* in the negation of negation; indeed, this *is* the absolute, and it is therefore "*Spirit*." The Holy Spirit thus becomes the advocate for speculative reason against the understanding that hardens and so hypostasizes being, the "functionary" of the Logos that affirms itself *against* the Father: it is the logicized Spirit. The *bonitas divina*, the Spirit as Love, who proceeds in God per modum voluntatis and holds sway in the *necessary sense of being*, the movement that disrupts hubristic reason's hypostasizing of being, has become the engine of a pseudo-exinanitio, an element of the Father's "salvation" in the Son's rebellion against him.

There is no particular need to underscore what history of thought has its speculative a priori in this dimension, or to point out that it is precisely here that we find the roots of Hegel's metaphysics of spirit. We are not able to enter any more deeply into the question how, at the start of modern metaphysics, by way of the emergence of the *possibilia* "in possibile esse" in the divine intellect—that is, in the ideas in the Logos—this clinging of the Son to God's other, and thus the experience of the Father's impotence had its beginning and remained determinative as a theme up through Hegel's attempt to sublate it and thus bring it to completion. In later chapters, we will bring some aspects of this development to expression in the systematic course of the investigation, without being able to enter more deeply into the historical indications, so that we do not digress too far from our theme. At this point, it has been necessary only to show how important it is to understand properly being's difference from God, or in other words to understand difference in God, if we wish to interpret the ontological difference in the proper way.

— V —

The Necessary Sense of Being
[*Seins-sinn*]

1. The *Ne-cessarium* and the *Not-Wendige* ("Need-Relieving")

Because the "place of the speculative unfolding" has come more clearly into view, we are able to interpret the movement of subsistence with less anxiety, despite all the dangers lurking within. We will be preserved from failure in this task to the extent that we hold ourselves vigilantly open to the necessary sense of being, since the power of this sense allows the crisis of being to be carried out in speculation. The necessary sense of being orders being "in reason" out of the presumption of pseudo-subsistence and into transnihilation, that is, into subsistence. It has its seal in the "nothing" of the difference that lies between to be and what is.

But in order that we might learn to hear and understand still more precisely the words "necessary" and "sense of being," we wish to try to bring to light what the words themselves indicate to us. This should be possible with the help of the Latin word *necessarium* and the German *das Notwendige*.

"Necessary" in Latin means the *ne-cessarium*, that which cannot be avoided. With respect to being's movement into subsistence, the Latin sense of the word indicates that being comes unavoidably out of its crisis, into subsistence, or in other words that being does not exist except in the *res*. The only way that reason can arrest being in its transnihilation into the res is by resisting the inevitable, detaching being from God for its own reflexive "use," and conceptualizing being in the form of "absolute knowledge."

In the German word *not-wendig*, another aspect of the crisis of being comes to expression, namely, the "whence," the resource that fills the need of the presumed subsistence. Here we cannot fail to mention explicitly the "distress [*Not*] of contradiction"; for the need has to be there if is going to be filled. The necessary in a certain sense "requires" the need that it fills. Without this need, it itself "is" not, as it were.

But if the nomen is *signum intelligibilis conceptionis*—that is, "a sign of the intelligible conception"[1]—then the dual signification brings to light a particular metaphysical conception. The Latin term points less to the actual poverty of the contradiction than to the inevitability of being an entity. It thus sets into relief the "terminus," the always already actual, positive reality (res!), which thus always already has being's movement of subsistence as such behind it in a certain respect.

The German word *not-wendig*, on the other hand, points to the distress of being's "ideal vacillation"; the distress becomes explicit by virtue of what relieves it. In this sense, the German word points to the explicitness of being in the crisis of its ideality, in which it exchanges itself for the "nothing." It is not difficult to see how the thinking that reflects on this word would run the risk of getting stuck in being's ideal "vacillation," indeed, of focusing on the distress as such so that the necessary might become visible in and through it. It is only too easy at this point for the contradiction of being's ideal vacillation to turn into the point of departure for all speculative unfolding and to subject thinking to the risk of failing to pass through the ideality of being in truth; on the other hand, in the word *res*, thinking faces the temptation of radicalizing the *non subsistens*, getting stuck in the res and sacrificing reason as intellectus capax entis to reason as mere ratio. But these two aberrations imply one another, as we will see in a moment.

There is no need to point out that our elaborations are anything but a mere playing with words.

2. The Good, "Pneumatic Reason," and the "Necessary Sense of Being": The "Finitizing" of Being

Since "to be" does not subsist, substance is called being in the proper sense with reference to the dimension of participation, which will be our focus in what follows. Everything else is called ens in relation to the substance: "For it is not for exactly the same reason that substance is said of being, and quantity, and the others—but all of them are called being by the fact that they are attributed to substance, which is the subject of the others. And, therefore, being is said primarily of substance and secondarily of the others."[2]

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[1] *SCG1*.34 and *ST* 1.13.9.2: "For names do not follow upon the mode of being of things, but upon the mode of being in our minds."

If we speak of the "to be" in its "existing-ness" [*sein Seiend-sein*], it is with reference to its subsisting actuality; "a thing is *perfect* insofar as it is actual."[3] It remains the case that *ipsum esse* does not subsist *actu*, even though it is *actus actuum*. This is what the "contradiction" refers to.

Now, Thomas says that everything that exists desires the good; moreover, "It is clear that a thing is desirable insofar as it is *perfect*, for all things desire their own perfection."[4]

One might thus imagine that esse seeks after its perfection, the subsistere, and therefore that what being is in the movement into subsistence is nothing other than a self-seeking—which the good enables because the good is that which all things pursue. In this sense, being, too, as non subsistens, wants to exist, and because the good is *in rebus*, it therefore strives after the *esse habens*, that is, the concrete substance.

If we thus interpret being as "striving," however, we totally undermine the necessary sense of being. How is being supposed to come out of the crisis in a striving after its subsistence if substance is "not yet" given to being as its destination? Wouldn't we therefore have to say that the subsisting of the concrete substance is already pregiven in being itself as its terminus? But wouldn't this mean that being already presupposes its movement of subsistence, its exinanitio, as something already accomplished? In this case, the good gets degraded into a function of being, which only *seems* to empty itself but in reality is seeking itself. But if it is seeking itself, this implies, further, that "to be" is something that has not yet been achieved; that is, it is mere potency. The fissure of the "not" that passes through the difference between being and beings would in fact once again be dissolved into an extension of being into the substance, the revealedness of being in reason (verum) would be merged together with the *good* that resides in concretely subsisting things. The subsistere would have already occurred at the outset in the dimension of the verum, and being's movement into subsistence would always already "have been." But reason, which resolves the contradiction of this fixed being and *subsequently* enacts the movement into subsistence, would thus take a "voluntative" form; it would become a pneumatic reason, energized by appetitus. Since fixed ipsum esse, as stuck in itself, has not yet wholly achieved its positivity, *perfectio*, *bonitas*, or self-adequation [*Seinsgemäßheit*], in "coming to itself," pneumatic reason's appetitus acquires the function of driving the operatio of reason into the concrete (bonum *in rebus*), negating the negation of the "nothing" (non subsistens) and thus affirming being itself as positive. But because, as we saw, the as-yet unmediated *res* (*reality*) corresponds to the "empty being" that has not yet achieved its positivity in *ideality*, this *res* is also mediated and opened up through the enactment of the negation of the non subsistens. Being's bonicity, at which this pneumatic reason aims, would be therefore identical with the moment in which being carries out the negation of the negation, with respect to both its ideality and its reality.

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[2] *De princip. naturae*, 16.

[3] *ST* 1.5.1.

[4] *ST* 1.5.1.

But it is not difficult to see that this pneumatic reason is nothing but the projected actualization—now in terms of the "finite" participation—of the event that we attempted to interpret in Part A, chapter IV, in the section "The Theological A Priori of the Pseudo-Speculative Unfolding of Difference in God": it is "Spirit" ["*Geist*"] as the movement that negates the negation.

One could object at this point, however, that Thomas himself says: "non-beings desire the good" and "the good extends to non beings ... causally."[5] If esse as non subsistens is then interpreted in this sense as a *non ens*, then the good would be precisely the actuality, the perfectum, that esse sought, insofar as the causality of the bonum extended to this non ens.

To this objection, we would answer: If being in this sense is absorbed into the appetitus for the bonum in the movement into subsistence and is determined as a non ens in *this particular way*, then we are degrading the actus actuum and the perfectio omnium perfectionum into a mere potentiality. The good does not extend to being itself as if being were simply a "material" at its disposal from the beginning, just as the "Spirit" does not "use" the impotent Father and the finite-limited Son as the "material" of his self-actualization as the negation of negation. Being itself would in this case have become *materia prima, potentia pura realis*. Here we already come to see the original roots of the materialism that arises from the logicizing of the "spirit"; there will be more to say about this at a later point.

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[5] *De ver.* 21.2.2.

If we posit the "to be" in its procession from God as *non ens* in *this particular way*, then we destroy its character as *similitudo divinae bonitatis*. We thus posit it as a pure potency next to God. God would therefore have to make himself necessary by means of his first effect *ad extra*; he would first have to affirm himself. Being's coming to itself in the movement into subsistence would imply, now with necessity, the finitizing of God, who outwardly begets himself within the element of "pure potentiality"!

Being would become a singular manifestation of God's impotence to create. But if being came forth from God in such a way that it strove after the entity *by its own power* [*von sich aus*], then being "as such" would have projected the beings beforehand (in an absolute a priority) as its definitive destination, and indeed as actual, in order to justify its appetitus. Being would have to make itself into an ipsum esse subsistens "outside of" God so that it would be able to allow the beings to arise from itself, in order at the same time to manifest itself in its "true" nonsubsistence: its "first order of business" is to achieve subsistence. With this, God gets sacrificed to the magic of the contradiction. But as for the second claim—that is, "The good extends to non entia"—Thomas expressly adds to the passage cited: "And so we can call non beings those things that are in potency and not in act."[6]

To place an appetere in being itself would mean to enfeeble being, turning it into potency, and thus to reconceive the movement into subsistence as a motus.

But being, thus interpreted, turns back immediately to the absolute ground in the diffusio of its procession out of God. What more would there be to "strive after," if the only thing "left over" were God himself as the absolute Perfectum?! The participation in being in accordance with being's emanation from God in this case would be canceled out, since it "is no longer necessary." Being no longer aims at its finite subsistence. It is totally emptied out. The moment this happens, however, God gets radically hardened into an "abstract identity," since he excludes any participation. Just as he is not able to communicate being to beings, so too is the gift of being at bottom nothing but a movement of the God who lusts after his own glory, the God who has to achieve himself.

In this way, God's collapse into the finite, which passes through the pure potentiality of being, and God's hardening into an infinite essence necessarily imply one another. The good's self-diffusion freezes up in order, by means of the finite, to beget externally through the process of a logicized and loveless God and to bring itself to completion. God's essence (!) is thus sucked back into the ideal vacillation of the being that has been empowered by contradiction, and it is through the mediation of this being that God affirms himself as "all in all." God finds himself "through" what is opposed to him, namely, the pseudo-subsisting being. In this way, the infinite essence becomes the lightless servant of hypostasized being, that is, of the finite reason that posited the contradiction on the basis of the substantializing of being.

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[6] *De ver.* 21.2.2.

Aquinas's statement "Since the essence of good consists in this, that something perfects another as an end"[7] therefore does not mean that God "perfects" esse itself "as an end." If he did, God would make the contradiction of being the potent soil from which he would bring forth the flowers of concrete beings per modum finis. He would posit himself in being outside of himself, he would attain to himself in the contradiction, in order "thereby" to come into effect. But God is not the perfectivum of being as an other to himself; for being is *not* participated in as an "other" to God, but rather in accordance with the outpouring of its procession from God. Otherwise, God would be handed over to what is absolutely other to himself. In the outpouring of its procession from God, being is the likeness of the overflowing of divine love and is therefore the likeness "in the other" to God, that is, finite being.

God does not target being as an end, and by the same token, being does not aim at the entity. Both evils would have their roots in the contradiction of being as potency.

Thomas says further: "Created existence is itself a likeness to the divine goodness. So in desiring to be, things *implicitly* desire a likeness to God and *God Himself.*"[8] Because being is precisely "nothing," it is itself perfectio omnium perfectionum. It has in itself the ratio finis because it "is" perfectio omnium perfectionum—as "nothing" next to God! For this reason, being does not gather up beings as their finis in a pseudo-subsisting focal point juxtaposed to God; instead, God himself is the creative, unifying end of all creatures. For this reason, we may also say of creatures: *desiderant esse et Deum implicite.*

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[7] *De ver.* 21.2.

[8] *De ver.* 22.2.2.

Being opens itself up in the ratio finis; that is, it has the "rationem *boni*." But this shows in the most profound way that being *is* "nothing," or, in theological terms, that the Spirit of God pervades [*durchwaltet*] the ontological difference; he affirms the crisis of being and holds open the ontological difference. Here we discover the hidden truth that was perverted by the calculating reason that hypostasizes being into the "Spirit"-ether of the self-achieving God.

Being as love relieves the distress of the reason that is trapped in the vacillation of being. It is the *ratio boni* that carries thinking through the "crisis of being": *Ipsum … esse habet rationem boni.*[9] For this reason, finite reason has always already been redeemed from the ambiguity of the contradiction and the hunger of its presumption. This is the only way to unfold the participation in being properly, without the pursuit of the movement of subsistence collapsing into a rationalistic achievement of the understanding.

One can justly say that the necessary sense of being orders being into finitude—that is, into the self-finitizing of the act of subsistence—in "obedience to the Spirit" ["*Geistgehorsam*"]. What is most profoundly at issue for reason is therefore "finitude," precisely on the basis of obedience to being. This *descensus* of being, however, opens up on the basis of the transnihilation of being in its crisis. What "descends" from the origin is therefore not being "as such," which would be loved for its own sake, but rather always already the entity, because there is no mediator between God and creatures, and being is nothing other than "pure mediation." But if we were to interpret the "self-finitizing" of being and its original positivity in the act of subsisting, then we could say that being itself is always already itself in the multiplicity of beings, which are at play with each other in mutual givenness because of the unique-unifying groundless-ground [*einig-einigende Ab-grund*] of being. The *esse habens*, the dimension of participation, can be unfolded on the basis of the bonum: "Esse itself, therefore, has the ratio of goodness. Just as it is impossible, then, for anything to be a being which does not have esse, so too it is necessary *that every being be good by the very fact of its having esse*."[10]

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[9] *De ver.* 21.1.

[10] *De ver.* 21.2.

3. The Phases of the Movement into Subsistence

A. The Twofold Sense of the Gift/Task [*Aufgabe*] of Being

As we now attempt to unfold the phases of being's movement into subsistence, it is good to keep in mind that this process is not an occurrence [*Geschehen*] that is objectified "outside" of reason, in the sense that reason enters into this movement only after the fact. For, "*on the basis of the essence,*" our reason comes to know being "and whatever belongs essentially to being as such,"[11] and "it is not possible for the ratio entis to be unknown to us."[12] The actualization of the phases of being's movement into finitude *is* therefore reason's self-actualization, since reason can never return to itself from a starting point outside of being in the "nothing" without positing being next to itself in reflection and substantializing the "beginning." All the temptations that now befall us are temptations that arise in the self-actualization of the personalizing reason *of man*, who exhibits his humanity by taking the measure of the basic rift that passes through the ontological difference in his own nature. Reason "undergoes" the difference in the same way that it decides a priori regarding the concrete actualization of its existence [*Dasein*], which is to say the way that man pro-jects the concrete mode of his being-in-the-world and his relationship to God. Our thinking therefore begins from within the difference that has always already been opened up between being and beings.[13]

What is at issue here is not merely an interpretation of the reality of beings that simply lie there before us as given facts. Thinking is not limited at its origin to the neutral facticity of a self-enclosed substance. Instead, finite reason stands in the constant "poverty" ["*Not*"] of its beginning.

One thus wishes to avoid being burdened by the speculative recapitulation [*Wieder-holung*] of thought's movement in its obedience to the necessary sense of being. It is to be itself, which accompanies thinking along its course, that demands this obedience.

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[11] *SCG* 2.83.

[12] *De ver.* 11.1.3. What justifies the receptive capacity of reason that enables it to grasp being is not a passive "emptiness," but the spontaneity of its a priori perfection by the truth of being. Otherwise, reason (qua forma intellectualis) would be dominated [*überherrscht*] by being as a material potency to receive: "Potentiality to exist may be taken not only in the sense of a passive potentiality that is on the side of matter [!], but also in the sense of an active power which is on the part of the form [!] ... because the power [*virtute*] of existence is proportionate to the degree in which a form is in a thing." *De pot.* 5.4.1.

[13] It is necessary here to clarify a misunderstanding. We often translate the word ens in Aquinas as "to be" [*Sein*]. We see that we are not doing a violence to the expression once we realize that Thomas never allows the ens to be contracted into a merely factical res, but rather, as he makes evident time and again, he understands it on the basis of esse. He always already does his thinking on the basis of the ontological difference, since for him there is simply no way to transpose oneself irrationally into the dimension of being as being by the power of the "will to pure beginning."

Being's movement into subsistence disclosed itself as being's transcendental "path" into its finite act of subsisting. What becomes clear here is *how* being comes to a stand by affirming itself in obedience to its necessary sense. In its self-affirmation, being has not yet achieved itself as being if it "tarries" ["*west*"] in the ideal vacillation and attempts to gather itself up *there* by means of finite reason's sublation of the *non subsistens*. Being's movement of finitization would in this case be nothing more than the primal hypostasis's gnostic fall into fragmented finitude, and despite the sharpness and "pain" of the fragmentation, the movement would at bottom be simply an extension of being into the positively given reality of the entity. For this reason, we can interpret the movement into subsistence, in the original elucidation of the structure of its phases, only as the self-emptying "transnihilation of being" that takes place in the baptism in the "spirit" of the bonitas divina. In other words, ipsum esse non subsistens does not have the structure of an essence in a sense that would allow it to con-cretize itself into a substantial entity and unity. Essentialized being itself would in this case be finite spirit's "divine throne" within the madness of contradiction. The abyss of bonitas, however, allows the hubristic emancipation of speculative reason to be sublated and brought to grief: to be *is* "nothing," because it shelters in itself the *ratio boni*. The ratio boni also keeps it from negating this "nothing" by taking on an "essential structure," which it gathers from the finite ens and projects into itself. To negate the "nothing" in this way would be to exclude the movement of finitization. *Being as being is superessential and cannot be substantialized.*

Being therefore does not "preserve" itself in the vacillation and is not reflected therein as a hypostasis in the mirror of its unity. It does not secure itself preemptively in a unity that floats above beings. It is not preoccupied with itself in opposition to God. For this reason, being does not keep guard over the unity that belongs to ipsum esse as "something to be grasped." It is indeed not an *aliquid* that is concerned with its being, even though we read that "everything guards its unity as it guards its being."[14] One cannot interpret the actualization of being's movement into subsistence in the sense of a *custodire suam unitatem*, which being would have to acquire "through" the essence.

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[14] *ST* I.11.1.

If the abyss of bonitas hands being over to the obedience of transnihilation, then unity cannot accrue to being from being itself.

Thus being must *give itself up* [*auf-geben*], and it must do so unreservedly. This occurs in its transnihilation, which is not an annihilation because what is at issue here for being, by virtue of its positivity, is most originally itself and the deepest depths of the sense of being become manifest in this actualization.

In this giving up there lies hidden, nevertheless, an uncanny ambiguity, insofar as the intellect that is essentially capax entis is tempted to trap being's self-surrender in the ideal vacillation and "fix it" there, and thus to refuse to bend to being's exinanitio and to sacrifice the pseudo-wealth of the hypostasis of being to the poverty of finitude.

Transnihilation as being's self-surrender, however, cannot therefore be the annihilation of being, because being is participated in *secundum diffusionem processionis* out of God. If "to be" were eliminated, then the various entities would represent so many little bits of God.

Being's "self-surrender," moreover, does not mean that being now descends from the throne of subsistence, upon which it had presumptuously set itself. This would not be a self-gift. Being, as hypostasis, would remain *ens* and would in this case only go through the motions of emptying itself. Being's "giving itself up" [*Aufgabe*] is being's giving itself away [*sich-hinweg-geben*] into finitude, and on this path [*Weg*], nothing is done "with" or happens to being, because it *is* "nothing."

But in this original sense of giving up, the necessary sense of being is once again determinative in an exceptional manner, for *ipsum esse habet rationem boni.*[15] The *bonum importat rationem finis*—or, in other words, goodness—"implies the logic of an end"! For this reason, being's going *away* from itself is a coming *toward* itself as task, insofar as being makes itself into its own task *on the way toward itself* as the very giving up of self that it is. Being is a giving up of self as a task given to itself, which means it is being's coming toward itself [*Das Sein ist sich selbst Auf-gabe in der Selbst-auf-gabe*]. That which is gets thus swept up into being's self-gift and movement of finitization, which opens it up more and more to being until it reaches the level of personal reason, the *intellectus capax entis*. Because the cosmos *is* by virtue of being's self-emptying self-gift, being itself by the same stroke makes itself the task of the cosmos. The guiding sense [*Die Sinn-richte*], which directs the cosmos and affirms it in its movement, is therefore nothing other than the reason that obeys the sense of being: as the goal in evolution that has always already been anticipated and "achieved" by being's gift of itself as a cosmic task. To the extent that reason remains in being's vacillation, it stands against this cosmic evolution; it hampers and frustrates this unfolding.

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[15] *De ver.* 21.2.

Being's self-tasking self-gift, however, is not to be understood in the sense that ipsum esse held back something for itself in the exinanitio, an a priori destination, as it were, which would have to be achieved as the goal of being's return movement to itself, as the fundamental Gestalt of cosmic evolution. In this case, being's transnihilation would not be taken seriously. Being would not have given itself over, just as it would never have given itself over if the finite entities had pro-jected being on the basis of mere finitude, as their own task ["*Aufgabe*"] to be achieved by their own resources. The fullness of being would in this case be nothing more than a goal to be pursued; being would therefore be posited a priori as a potency.

The ambiguity of the *Aufgabe*—"gift" or "task"—is sealed in being's ratio boni, which is simultaneously ratio finis. According to the necessary sense of being, it is being's being "nothing" precisely *as being* that allows it to be *finis* as "task." For the "more unreservedly" ["*je rest-loser*"] being gives itself up in the movement of finitization as God's greatest gift—that is, the more radically speculative reason experiences this self-gift and so the more radically the mutual exchange of being and "nothing" comes into view—the more originally the finite is mediated in its absolute ground, which in this case is *not* eclipsed by the vacillation of being. But in this return to the origin, the finite is endowed with being, which, in its exinanitio, has given itself over to the finite.

B. Being "in" the Movement of Subsistence

i. Being and Essence

Let us continue along in this train of thought!

Being's self-gift outlines the "path" toward subsisting finite unity with itself. The movement of subsistence sets forth the shape of this path. But, as we have seen, "to be" cannot mediate this unity (or its act of subsisting) itself, because it is "nothing." It is therefore in a certain sense dependent on its mediation to finite subsistence. But what mediates being's unity with itself and what being depends on in its coming to itself can *be* nothing "other" than being: "for nothing can be added to being as extraneous to it, because there is nothing extraneous to being other than non-being, which can be neither form nor matter."[16]

The mediating principle is what we call *essence* (essentia), and it must itself proceed from being; indeed, being is "formal with respect to everything in the thing."[17] "Nothing is more formal or more simple than 'to be.'"[18] Whatever distinguishes itself over "against" being as something different, insofar as it is its mediating principle, has to originate from being, the *actus ultimum*.[19] As the "other" to being, the essence, considered in itself, is fundamentally *non ens*. For "that which has being from another, considered in itself, is nonbeing, if this thing is *other* than being itself which receives being from another,"[20] *enti non possunt addi aliqua quasi extranea*,[21] and "not only is the quiddity said to be but also to be created: since before it had being it was nothing [!], except perhaps in the intellect of the creator, where it is not a creature but the creating essence."[22]

But this "other," which proceeds from being, must at the same time be already given, or posited, as *really distinct* from being. For being is not extended as an *ens incompletum*, out of its ontological vacillation and into the concrete finite subsistence, in a concrete unity with its mediating principle that has already been actualized from the beginning. If it were, the principle that mediates being would be a linear extension of being or a deduction from it; that is, it would not be posited as really distinct. The sharpness of the real distinction between being and essence therefore results from the transcendental experience of the *nonsubsistence* of the "to be" itself, which affirms itself in its subsistence "only" in the concrete finite entity and cannot in any way anticipate this in the vacillation.

The properly real distinction between being and essence also receives some light from the fact that being does not have itself in view in its "crisis" and does not release the essence from itself in a reflection on itself *as a hypos-*

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[16] *De pot.* 7.2.9.

[17] *ST* 1.8.1.

[18] *SCG* 1.23.

[19] *An.* 6.2.

[20] *De pot.* 3.13.4.

[21] *De ver.* 1.1. However, the distinction between essentia and existentia can be determined ultimately only on the basis of the difference between being and the concrete subsistence. On this, see Ulrich, "Inwiefern ist die Konstruktion," esp. chap. 3, on Aquinas's experience of being.

[22] *De pot.* 3.5.2.

tasis. Speculative reason would in this case have closed itself to the unconditionality of being's transnihilation.

The speculative seriousness of the self-gift—that is, being's inability to have disposal over itself in the vacillation—comes to expression in the real difference between the posited essence and being. It is here that the truth that being can never mediate itself into a subsisting unity next to God, but is "dependent" on the essence, becomes manifest: this dependence is not due to some weakness, but rather to the power of its poverty (non subsistens), since the "glory" of the hypostasis would imply nothing more than the depotentiating of being into an "empty" concept or into a potency that is able to receive determination!

We see that the real distinction between being and essence becomes manifest most profoundly from the perspective of the convertibility of being and "nothing."

But if the essence is what is supposed to mediate being to itself, then the unity it has cannot result from its participation in being, but must rather belong to it as due to itself; the essence is one *per seipsam*. To deny this would be to fix being as a unity closed up in itself and set against the movement of finitization. With great insight, Thomas therefore says, "Hence the essence of a thing is one of itself, not because of its act of existing; and so it is not one by any participation, though it is a being and good in this way."[23] The essence therefore proceeds from being because being is fullness, *completum et simplex*, and because there can be nothing external to it other than non being; it is posited as really distinct from being, however, because being as completum et simplex *does not subsist* but is mediated to subsistence in, through, and with the essence; being is thereby "re-collected into itself" ["*er-innert*"] and affirms itself in finitude. The crisis of being therefore unfolds itself further in the process of the illumination of the phases of the movement of subsistence in the real distinction between the principles being and essence.

Being "comes" to itself by means of the essence, which is determined as potency; but it does not do so as "being simpliciter," as "uniquely one," for then the hypostasis of being would once again become the goal.

Being does not flow into a single essence, and it does not thereby affirm itself in an accumulated fullness as *completum et simplex*. This is simply not possible. "The absolute ground posits in its otherness the likeness or the image (*Abbild*) of itself. But this other is not the same as the ground. The difference, however, does not accrue to the other from the outside, but rather its 'being different' is an absolute and comprehensively given determination of the other. It is therefore simply a matter of 'its being image' (*Abbildlichkeit*). But insofar as the other is an image of what is absolutely one and simple, it follows from the fact of its 'difference' that it is necessarily 'composed and multiple.'"[24]

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[23] *De ver*. 21.5.8.

ii. Unity and Multiplicity in the Ground of the Good

If being as being were to affirm and arrive at itself in a single essence, then this would imply that it had itself in view as ipsum esse in the ontological vacillation. As *completum et simplex*, esse would be absolutely posited in its "singularity"—that is, in opposition to its nonsubsistence—and therefore the essence would no longer be given as really distinct from being. Reason would have already attributed the essence to being as completum et simplex, established in its "singularity" in the ideal vacillation.

Being, however, can tend toward itself as the destination at which the movement into subsistence aims only in its self-emptying and transnihilation—that is, in its listening obedience to the necessary sense of being—which pervades the ontological difference as love and keeps open the real distinction between being and essence. If one were to say that being comes to itself in a single essence, it would represent a failure of obedience.

But if being's transnihilation in the crisis fails, then being *can never* "arrive" at a single subsistence. For this reason, pseudo-subsistence in a single essence means the absolute collapse of being in its true subsistence. This collapse reaches its completion in the process of an infinite becoming: in "a single" sea of the twilit "pure" completum et simplex. This speculative a priori drives thought into the essence-less, nihilistic moiling [*Umtrieb*] of absolute chaos.

In this case, however, the demand for "an" essence is only apparent. Once the completum et simplex is isolated as univocal medium next to God, it "needs" no essence to mediate itself. In the indifferentiated crisis, it has already degenerated into essence.

But if being is conversely "nothing," then it cannot intend itself when it releases the essence from itself as a really distinct principle that allows it to subsist in unity with itself. For what would there be "in" the nonsubsistence ("nothingness") to aim at? Therefore, as it enacts being's return to itself, speculative reason "immediately" encounters the *sublation* of being in God. It determines the impossibility of participation in being *next to* God. This experience of God's always already perfected absolute positivity of love compels reason to determine the "self-emptying" of being as an act that has always already been superseded in finite beings. If God is therefore absolutely One, then the ipsum esse is "subsistently itself" in the multitude, in the multiplicity and variety of beings, insofar as what comes to expression in finite beings is precisely not (!) the fragmentation of being but its *unity*, which reveals itself in the act of subsisting. This unity, however, by virtue of the fissure of transnihilation that passes through being, at the same time reveals the "sublation" of being in its difference from beings—in God. In the multiplicity and variety of beings, the abyss of the bonitas divina therefore manifests itself in an original way, an abyss that reason opens up in its obedience to being and in the enactment of being's transnihilation, and so brings being onto its path in the multiplicity of the finite. Multiplicity is not something that supervenes upon being from the outside. Instead, it springs from being's properly enacted movement into subsistence, insofar as it is precisely the infinite positivity of the "One" God that allows being to be "itself" in the multiplicity of its finite subsistence.

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[24] G. Siewerth, *Der Thomismus als Identitätssystem*, 100.

If we were to fix being as an absolute idea in an *essentiell* sense next to God, then multiplicity would turn out to be a mere fall from being's infinity, rather than being determined and affirmed as a positive breakthrough of nonsubsistent being into its finite subsistence. The notion of being as absolute idea is necessarily opposed to the principle of multiplicity. By contrast, the speculative enactment of the desubstantializing of being, the illumination of its exinanitio, sublates precisely the principle of multiplicity in being itself, whereby what appears to be "trivial" takes on infinite weight.

Thus St. Thomas says that things "are related to unity and multiplicity in the same way that they are related to *being*," and he continues, "since the entire esse of things depends on God, ... the cause of the plurality of things must be sought *in God*."[25] "In other words, multiplicity and distinction do not occur in things by chance or accidentally, just as the production of things does not occur by chance or accidentally, but rather according to an end,"[26] and further he observes with great consistency, "The disposition of things as to goodness is the same as the disposition of things as to being,"[27] for bonitas sustains and enkindles reason's obedient enactment of transnihilation. "The things produced by God could not be endowed with a likeness of the divine goodness [i.e., the ipsum esse] in the simplicity in which that goodness is found in God [which would be the case, if the completum et simplex were able to negate its nonsubsistence already in the ideal vacillation, apart from the movement of finitization!]. Hence what is one and simple in God had to be represented in the produced things in a variety of dissimilar ways. There had to be diversity in the things produced by God, in order that the divine perfection might in some fashion be imitated in the variety found in things."[28]

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[25] *Comp. theol.* 72.

If God posited the negating of negation in being's movement of finitization—that is, if he made himself absolute through the affirmation of his own necessity—then the universitas creaturarum would manifest God's goodness, and the multiplicity of creatures would manifest God's absolute necessity "as such." If the essentiae were posited a priori as "conditions of receptivity" for esse, which would come to them from the outside as an accident, then the otherness to God in the divine intellect would be a limitation placed on God already from the outset. God would be able to achieve his absolute mediated identity in the heart of the bonitas only by "bypassing" the transnihilation of being and moving directly to the *universitas creaturarum*, and would reveal himself, as we already saw, in this enactment as "Spirit" (Love). In reality, the positing of the multiplicity of beings would in this case have sprung not from being as love, but rather from the self-seeking God who demonstrates his power. The negation of negation—that is, the positing of multiplicity ad extra—would be at the same time the terminus of divine love, whose life would consist in this multiplicity of beings and the "kingdom of spirits" (Hegel). This temptation would be still further reinforced by the fact that in truth the will (God's love) aims at the entity insofar as it subsists and is concrete being. The ex-positing [*Heraus-setzung*] of the finite outside of God therefore appears to be a sealing of absolute love. But to say this would be to forget that the bonitas divina, which God's love has in view, affirms the radical *transnihilation* of being, and therefore intends the concrete finite. By affirming being's transnihilation, God's goodness eliminates the linear deduction of the concrete from a comprehensive, universal horizon of being, and thus simultaneously reveals that the creatures represent God's goodness *as finite creatures*, according to the perfection *that is proper to them* and not according to a "perfection" determined as an extension of the substantialized *completum et simplex*. This would necessarily lead to an *aequiparantia* of beings in relation to God. "Not even the entire universe of creatures perfectly represents the divine goodness by setting it forth adequately, but represents it only in the measure of perfection possible to creatures."[29]

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[26] *Comp. theol.* 102.

[27] *ST* 1–2.18.4.

[28] *Comp. theol.* 72.

Here it once again becomes apparent how the sharpness of the real distinction, which arises from the essence "prior" to being, though at the same time as proceeding from being, unmasks any false emanation of the finite in the sense of a complete crystallizing of the esse completum et simplex as presumption. In this case, the One that proceeds in an absolute manner from the One would be being as substantialized.

The impossibility of such a procession, however, becomes clear when we recognize being's nonsubsistence, for the bonitas divina as self-outpouring absolute love cannot set its sights on the being that clings to itself in ideality; "granted, therefore, that a creature were its own act of being, as God is, the creature's act of being *would still not have the character of good except on the supposition of its relation to its Creator.*"[30] The hypostasis of being depotentiates God as love. When we speak of the bonitas divina, then, what we mean is the liberation of the *concrete being* from being according to the mode of being appropriate to it! Thus being's unifying unity holds sway in the multiplicity of beings as order. "It is necessary that all numerosity that derives from a one be derived according to an order, because nothing comes from a one except what is unified."[31] The bonitas divina, however, is present in the *secundum ordinem*: *bonum ... in ordine consistit*.[32] The good is therefore the mediating dimension, in which the *esse completum et simplex* comes about as the mediated "unity in multiplicity" of the finite in the concrete subsistence of what exists. "Therefore, just as the first rational principle of divine providence is simply the divine goodness, so *the first rational principle in creatures is their numerical plurality*, to the establishment and conservation of which all other things seem to be ordered."[33] But the bonitas divina is not identified with the hypostasized "one" being in the ideal sphere. If it were, reason would have allowed ipsum esse to come to its end in concrete subsistence juxtaposed to God, passing over the exinanitio of being and thus negating the bonitas divina. The necessary sense of being, however, is not trapped inside the esse completum et simplex; it extends *beyond* the crisis of being (in ideality), but not in the sense of a continuation of this ideality. Instead, it does so as the seal of being's superessentiality, whereby it first opens up the condition of possibility of being's movement into subsistence "through the essence." If the bonitas were fixed in the manifestness of being as being (verum), then multiplicity, as we said above, would remain nothing more than a gnostic fall from being; the finite would not be affirmed *as finite*, or the original simplex would have to break apart and dissolve into multiplicity. In both cases, however, the ordo of being is destroyed.

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[29] *Comp. theol.* 102.
[30] *De ver.* 21.5.
[31] 1 *Sent.* 3.4.3.
[32] *SCG* 3.20.

But the decisive tribunal in all this *is the essence*; this is the dimension established so to speak as the metaphysical signum that makes manifest the fact that God's love does not will the hypostasis of being (otherwise, God's fatherhood would remain stuck in the abstract identity of the un-communicated divine nature), as well as the fact that love therefore aims at the "*numerositas creaturarum*, for the sake of and the maintenance of which every thing else appears to be ordered." The essence is obedient to being as the open "space" of being's self-affirmation: the pledge and seal of its exinanitio in the sowing of the numerositas entium.

c. Being and the Non-Other

Being thus does not "come" to itself in a single essence, but rather in the variety and multiplicity of beings; the necessary sense of being, rooted in "being as love," brings forth the multiplicity, variety, and diversity of the finite, and it is in this multiplicity that the *unity* of being itself is made into a "task" ["*Aufgabe*"]. The proper understanding of the ordo thus results from the speculative determination of the circumincession of being and "nothing," which occurs in obedience to being.

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[33] *SCG* 3.97. It seems that one of Maréchal's concerns finds a fruitful answer in the approach we are taking here: "Affirming the most basic data puts a strain on logical coherence: the One corresponds to the many, being is burdened by non-being. The ontological critique demands with all necessity a synthesizing perspective, from which this fundamental antinomy would be objectively overcome." J. Maréchal, *Le point du départ de la métaphysique*, vol. V, *Le Thomisme devant la philosophie critique* (Louvain: Museum Lessianum, 1926), 14.

We are therefore able to say: Being *is* not the other to God, but it "is" the *being* of what is other to God. The others are gathered together in the unifying unity of being insofar as they exist. But the being in this "unity" "is" … "nothing"; that is, it is always already *ipsum esse subsistens*. Thus the others do not exist next to God in such a way that God would be the Other to these others as the *Summum Ens* at the level of the univocal *completum et simplex*. Because being is "nothing," God is instead the "Not Other" of that which is other to him. He is the Not Other because ipsum esse is not suspended in a vacillation "between" God and creatures, and the entity can ultimately never be said to be on the basis of *this* being. Because being is "nothing," God is the Not Other, but precisely in being the Not Other he is the wholly other, since beings are not an extension of himself. This *maior dissimilitudo* comes to expression in being's transnihilation, that is, in the radicality of being as gift. Being gives itself away completely in accordance with the outpouring of its procession from God: Being is "given completely away" ["*Vergeben*"] and this is what makes it the unifying unity of beings. "Though esse is most formal of all"—"nothing is more formal or simpler than esse"[34]—"yet it is still most able to be communicated."[35]

It is because of the abyss of divine goodness alone that there is the absolute communication that arises from being's self-gift and transnihilation. The fact that God is the Not Other, without becoming absorbed in creatures—that is, in absolute finitude—is unintelligible only for a thinking that has lost sight of the crisis of being in its superessentiality. To the contrary, one can say that God's Not-Otherness is in fact the maximum of his Otherness (otherness in the sense of univocal, infinite Essentia or absolute Res). The maximum of God's Otherness, indeed, determines the seriousness of being's transnihilation as the intimacy of God's loving presence.

It becomes directly apparent that the dread that stems from such a "summit" of speculative thinking immediately tempts reason to sublate [*abheben*] God and creatures in an "onto-theological" manner as so many "beings" juxtaposed to one another and to actualize the mediation by positing being merely in intellectu creato.

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[34] *SCG* 1.23.

[35] *An.* 1.17.

If the maximum of God's Otherness is *not* his Not-Otherness, then being is also not similitudo divinae bonitatis, and in this case reason does not enact being's self-surrender and its transnihilation. But this means that being is "so much" nothing "between" God and creatures that God is the Not Other and is therefore always already "wholly from the perspective of the creatures" *the wholly other*.[36] But as the Not Other, God is himself.

There isn't the slightest contradiction in this unless one tried to formulate this statement in a rationalistic way. In this case, one would run into "paradoxes" that nevertheless do not arise from the matter itself and cannot be demonstrated on its basis.

4. Being "in" the Essence: The Obedience of Being

The essence that is posited as really distinct from being is therefore the seal of its transnihilation: "But being, insofar as it is being, cannot be different, but it can be diversified by something beside itself."[37] "Things are not distinguished from one another in having being, for in this they agree,"[38] and further we read, "Things differ by virtue of having different natures, to which being accrues in a diverse way."[39] Diversity and multiplicity therefore accrue to being "through" the essence. But the essences do not produce the multiplicity and diversity of beings from their own resources. Moreover, the ultimate ground and the absolute principle of the diversity of beings do not lie in the variety of the essences that receive being. To say that they do would imply that we have forgotten, not the really distinct positing of the essence, but the procession of the essence from being, insofar as nothing can be extraneous to being except nonbeing. Being would thus degenerate into a potency, which is multiplied by the essences into diversity and in this way brought to act by the essences. But as "potency," being is made into a concept, as we have already seen, and subsumed back into the subject, so that the unity that makes the many possible, since it is a mere *ens rationis*, also dissolves the multiplicity of the concrete beings. By contrast, multiplicity is brought forth from the abyss of being's bonitas and thus stems from being's superessentiality—and in *this* sense from something nonessential.

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[36] To think this through in a particular way seems to us to be of particular significance precisely also in view of Christ's revelation in the Holy Spirit, insofar as all theology has its speculative measure in the ontological difference. The Otherness of God conceived on the basis of nonsubsistence—that is, of being's superessentiality—reveals itself in the fact that the Logos does not take hold of human nature "from above" in the incarnation, but rather "comes forth" to us in the wholly unreserved character [*Restlosigkeit*] of the surrender that occurs in the Holy Spirit in a certain sense out of the human earth—as the Son of Man, "our brother." We will see later that being too as actus actuum and supreme likeness of God comes about in a certain sense "from below"—that is, precisely in transnihilation—as resulting from the principles of essence, in which it so to speak has the pledge of its transnihilation. There is no contradiction here!

The fundamental experience of "Jesus, our brother" is made possible on the basis of the experience of the superessentiality of being as the "Not Other." This "task of being," involving the destruction of being's hypostasis, which is entrusted to us today, stands out for example in Charles Péguy: "Et homo factus est.... It is a history, which has befallen eternity, the eternal, the spiritual, Jesus, God. In order to acquire the counterpart, the opposed perspective, as it were—the same history as the one that has befallen the earth: to have given birth to God—would require the converse: ... becoming man ... A blossom and fruit of the earth, a final result, a crowning, an unhoped for supreme achievement of temporal fruitfulness, ... like an overvoltage, a surge that is nevertheless (!) natural, like a summit." *Wir stehen alle an der Front* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1952), 85. Here is also where Teilhard de Chardin's notion of the evolution of the cosmos toward the Omega Point belongs. One ought not immediately to raise suspicions at this point, but rather ask oneself how profoundly the experience of being's superessentiality in its Not-Otherness is present. There would be a lot to say on this topic, especially with respect, too, to the speculative dimension of Nicolas of Cusa's text "De li non aliud."

[37] *SCG* 2.52.

[38] *SCG* 1.26.

[39] *SCG* 1.26.

Thus, assuming we don't sacrifice it to the transnihilation through to the factical res and the unmediated relation to the isolated essence, ipsum esse is also at its origin not exclusively related to the essence or determined by it *materialiter*, even though the essence is the principle by means of which being "comes to itself." The truth of superessential being also unveils itself in the fact that the essence, as we will see, is not the sole enabling ground of being; instead, being seals its exinanitio, as well as the absolute power it has in the "poverty" of its inability to cling to itself in the vacillation, in the fact that it allows the nonessential enabling ground of matter to proceed from itself.

For now, it is worth reflecting on the fact that the two statements "Being is superessential" and "The essence is the principle of being's self-unification" do not contradict each other. Instead, the two statements imply one another. Because being is superessential, because it unveils itself as *non subsistens*, the essence is able to proceed from it, which means that being is not already a priori submerged in the essence. But because the superessentiality displays itself in nonsubsistence, it is precisely here that we see most clearly the sharpness of the positing of the essence as really distinct from being and as the principle of being's *subsisting* self-affirmation. All the essentiality of entities, properly conceived, exists by virtue of being's superessentiality.

If we thus make the essence into the absolute principle of diversification, then we in fact eliminate the source of the essence itself. But the necessary sense of being, which pervades the crisis of the interchangeability of being and "nothing," is the origin of the essence, for it is on its basis that being carries out the movement of finitization, and thus on its basis too that the obedient dimension—that is, the potency—of its coming to itself "in" finitude opens itself up. The speculative unfolding relieves, as it were, the "distress of the contradiction." Reason's "always-already-having-*been*-with-*being*"—that is, the always already actualized turn in the direction wherein being lies, namely, toward beings—is the same "movement" in which being unifies itself in, through, and with the *essence* in the concrete subsistence. It is through the essence that being "obediently listens" [*ist hörig*] to its sense of being; that is, it is concrete being. The intellect's obedience to being is thus sealed in its self-outpouring upon the path as ratio, which attains its actualization in the infinite diversity of *materially* given things, even to the point of allowing sensibility to arise from out of itself. In this emptying into the nonessential dimension of matter, reason is open in an ultimate obedience to superessential being.

Provisionally, we can say the following regarding the positing of the essence, which is at the same time the emanation of the essence from *esse*:

1. Being is not annihilated [*vernichtet*] "through" the essence, but is instead transnihilated [*durchnichtet*]. The "annihilation of being" would mean that the essence becomes superfluous. But if the essence is posited in order to mediate being to substantial unity with itself, then it is not a self-enclosed fixed quantity, against which being shatters into the multiplicity of beings, but is instead open for that which is transnihilated. If this transnihilated reality were annihilated in the self-surrender, then the openness of the essence would be shut, and being would be dammed up in itself and hypostasized. The super-essential power of being thus opens up the "space of essence" ["*Wesensraum*"] for itself. From being's perspective, the essence is an "open space," which rises up to meet being. Such an "openness" is nothing other than "obedient listening to being" ["*Seinshörigkeit*"]. This "obedient listening" grows in depth and breadth in proportion to the extent that being conveys its proper fullness to beings. Thus the higher an essence stands in the order of being, the more radically it makes evidently available [*offen-bart*] its obedience with respect to the necessary sense of being … up to the point of embodied spirit, which, as capax entis bears the task of ontological obedience [*Seinsgehorsam*] as the self-*operatio* of its essence (!) … up to the point of the triune God, whose essence is his very "to be" and whose "open space of essence" is sublated in the absolute positivity of the ipsum esse subsistens, be-

cause of which the Father does not need any "maternal" principle (otherness: materia!) in order to beget his Son.

The speculatively opened "to be" affirms itself in the dimension of its obedience "vis-à-vis" ["*gegenüber*"][40] the necessary sense of being and unifies itself "lovingly" ["*mögend*"], so that the goal of the unification "made possible" [*er-möglichten*] by the essence is *not* the pseudo-subsisting ipsum esse. Thus the essence receives (recipit) being. Being's coming together with the essence is therefore determined as the reception of what has been transnihilated; being's transnihilation out of the crisis of its circumincession with the "nothing" bears witness to itself in being's being received. Being in the pseudo-subsistence, by contrast, absolutely repudiates both the transnihiliation and the *recipi*.[41]

2. As ipsum esse non subsistens, "to be" is undetermined and unlimitedly infinite.[42] If speculative reason takes the essence seriously as a dimension of obedience to being, then, precisely because of the nature of entity, it cannot cast a veil of entity-ness over "to be" and thus turn it into a substance. A radicalized essence metaphysics always faces the great temptation of summoning ipsum esse into the court of the "open space of essence" and absorbing it therein. But this would mean dissolving the finite's mediation in the infinite in favor of the isolated positivity of the entity in itself. In reality, however, the more clearly the obedience to being stands out in being's transnihilation through the essence—that is, the more clearly light is cast on the always already positive givenness of the ens—the more radically the nonsubsistence of ipsum esse and thus the participation in being, not next to God, but rather secundum diffusionem processionis ipsius *out* of God, comes to light. If the essence metaphysics is therefore carried through with consistency, then being as "pure mediation" receives speculative determination at its root. The finite stands out in its positivity, but it does so "together" with its sublation in God. Indeed, the mediating sublation in God itself affirms the positivity of the finite to the core in the most ultimate way possible.

But it is the essence that unveils the truth that being does not carry out its exinanitio merely in appearance, that it does not in fact ultimately hold something back, but rather finitizes itself wholly and completely. Precisely in doing so, being thus reveals its absolute sovereignty.

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[40] What comes to expression in the word *gegenüber* ("over-against") is nothing other than the real difference of essence from being.

[41] *Sp. cr.* 1.1.15.

[42] "Considered absolutely, 'to-be' itself is infinite, for there are infinite and finite modes in which it can be participated." *SCG* 1.43.

3. Being's reception by the essence is therefore a limitation, and in this sense undetermined being receives determination. But this determination does not accrue to it from outside (which would absolutize the positing of the essence); instead, the determination eventuates from being itself without being having to be presupposed as ipsum esse in the ontological vacillation for the sake of this determination (which would be in this case simply a negation of the non subsistens). "Through" the essence, speculative reason stands in the "judgment" [*Gericht*] of ontological obedience, for being is ex-"terminated" with respect to itself [*auf sich hin-"gerichtet"*] "through" the essence. The reason that would hypostasize being is condemned by this court to death; it is redeemed from its presumptuousness and the concept of being is opened up into the *plenitudo essendi*, which *in ratione boni est*.[43] But because the essence proceeds from being, this "execution" of being by the essence with respect to itself is not the annihilation of being. Instead, it is the self-affirmation of being in the sense of its setting itself up [*sich-Auf-richtens*] in its finite subsistence, insofar as it never secures itself in the finite act of subsisting as ipsum esse but remains a "task" that is at the same time a "gift" ["*Aufgabe*"] even though it is given *without remainder*: "Every creature is *simply finite*, insofar as its esse *is not absolutely subsistent*."[44] In this "execution," all the "possibilities" of the pseudo-subsistence of being are annihilated by the positing of the "space of essence" that proceeds from being. The essence's execution of being is nothing other than the enactment of being's obedience in its finitization and limitation. In this way, being's coming to itself in the movement of subsistence is a being limited "with respect to the nature of that which receives being."[45] The essence's execution of being with respect to itself is precisely the arbitration of this limitation. The essence is in this respect the critical dimension that allows us to overcome the various temptations that befall speculative reason when it carries out being's movement of subsistence. The execution of being by, or through, the essence takes away thought's capacity to relate being to itself in an absolute way "as being."

The essence "limits"[46] being and "restricts" it, but not as if *esse* were a thing lying outside of the essence. For the limitatio would in this case be the determination of an ontological potency, which would find its mediated fullness only through the *determinatio* as *negatio*. In the essence and through the essence, being grants to itself in an original way the metaphysical locus of its self-affirmation, *in* which the speculative condemnation and elevation [*Hinrichtung und Aufrichtung*] of being (also in reason's own self-actualization) occurs. This is what it means for being to be *coarctari* by or through the essence.[47]

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[43] *ST* 1–2.18.1.

[44] *ST* 1.50.2.4.

[45] Cf. E.E.4.

[46] *Sp. cr.* 1.1.15.

5. "Positive Reality" and the Interval between "Being and Essence"

The phases of being's movement of finitization were unveiled in the speculative "beginning" as the crisis of being in its convertibility with the "nothing"; they were unfolded further in the transnihilation of being as the procession and positing of the essence; they opened up in the receptio, limitatio, and coarctatio of being in, through, and with the essence, and they now take us directly into the positive reality of the finite entity.

At this point, we wish to reflect more profoundly on the "positive reality," in order thereby to experience the relationship between being and essence at an even more original level.

A. The Real Distinction of Principles [*der Gründe*] and Thought's Progression into Reality

The individual phases we have seen so far were able to be determined only in the needful [*notvollen*] undergoing of the speculative locus of the crisis of being. Over and over again, we are compelled to order ourselves into the necessary sense of being, which orders being into finitude and thereby unveils its superessentiality. The "certainty" of the obedience to the necessary sense of being, however, is not something that we are able to measure by ourselves without the entire unfolding going awry. Being's movement of finitization does not allow itself to be objectified into a reliable road map for our endeavor or to be used as an absolute method in Hegel's sense, even though at bottom it presents just this precisely in its inability to become wholly transparent to reflective reason.

Let us follow further where the matter leads us!

We have not yet said the last word regarding being's recipi, limitari, and coarctari by the essence. There is always a certain relation of the essence "as such" to being "as such" that still comes to expression in these Latin verbs; the transnihilation of being has not yet come forth in its originary weight. So long as the difference between being and essence is held fast in the speculative gaze, the essence has not yet exhaustively been "grasped" by being and sublated, just as being in reason has not yet been submitted to the ultimate rigor of the obedience of being. Only when being's transnihilation has been carried out to the point of the positively existing res—that is, when the difference holds sway no longer as a difference between being and essence [*Sein und Wesen*], but now as the difference between being and the subsisting entity [*Sein zum subsistierenden Seienden*], which overtakes the previous difference—is the ultimate rigor of being's movement of finitization made visible.

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[47] *Sp. cr.* 1.1.15.

What happens when the relation of the principles is characterized as a "correlation" is evident. The one "member"—namely, being—gets fixed in the vacillation, while the essence, the other "member," gets absolutized in the positing. The method of interpreting being's movement of finitization, which can be justified only to the extent that it remains always open to the necessary sense of being and constantly experiences being's transnihilation, is in this case *objectified* by viewing the two "members" as standing in a "relation between being and essence." Doing so ultimately closes up the ontological difference and makes it an absolute method. This seals thinking in confusion, no matter how much one may still speak of a *distinctio realis* between the principles. The mere "formulation" of the distinctio realis between the principles is impotent to prevent us from falling into confusion because the decision of the crisis of being belongs to a *superessential* dimension.

The procession of the essence out of being only too easily fixes thinking directly "in" the posited essence. The posited essence, in the *unitas per seipsam, non per participationem*,[48] fetters the speculative gaze to itself; it draws it away from being and binds it immediately to the positive res.

This schismatic and recalcitrant essence, which is no longer obedient to the sense of being, "tempts" reason (since the essence no longer receives) to dissolve being as gift, to set being up as a hypostasis, and to eliminate the exinanitio. Reason accentuates the positing of essence; it obscures the procession of the essence from being, which thereby "obeys" the transnihilation (in a certain sense on its own rather than being moved or compelled by something extrinsic to itself) in order to posit it next to God in an absolute manner or to affirm it as something that is not given but must first be "taken" [*"geholt"*].

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[48] *De ver.* 21.5.8.

Earlier, we pointed out that the phases of being's movement of finitization and the temptations that emerge therein are not events that can be objectified; instead, we must interpret the movement of finitization on the basis of reason's self-enactment.[49] This is the perspective that allows us properly to understand such phrases as "obeying being," the "open space of the essence," the "inability to cling to oneself," and so forth. But this is anything but an anthropomorphizing of ontology!

It is only too easy to overlook the fact that we do not come to see the composition of essence and existence[50] in its true light by speculatively undergoing the composition "as such" in the difference of principles we just discussed. Instead, we can see it properly only insofar as the givenness of the positive reality, the always already actualized entity, comes into view. We simply cannot play the composition of the principles off against the "positing" of the res. By virtue of being's nonsubsistence, all composition is already superseded in the entity, even if it is not annihilated, since otherwise the ontological difference would be dissolved.

B. The Positing of the Essence and Reality: A Path beyond Reality

The consideration of the real distinction between being and essence terminates in the "positive reality," in which being and essence are always already unified and blended into one, for there is no "extension" of being into essence. To be sure, the essence assimilates being insofar as it receives it. But the essence's reception of being has to be interpreted from the perspective of the crisis of being. The statement "The essence receives being" expresses the truth. But it has to be brought to completion in the speculative "pro-gress" into the always already posited positive reality.

A great danger arises that, once the movement of finitization opens up to us, we will no longer want to leave the interpretive field that becomes available. Instead, we encounter the temptation, in our passage through the "phases," to get "hung up" in the ontological vacillation, precisely at the moment that we need to take the step of genuinely recognizing how radically the necessary sense of being "annihilates" reason's ontological vacillation.

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[49] Which of course does not mean that being is determined with a view to human beings! This objection can no longer stand after everything we have learned up to this point.

[50] "Existence" [*"Existenz"*], here, does not mean a being that is in a certain sense already "concrete" in opposition to *ipsum esse* as "pure mediation."

This progress toward the positive entity reveals that the essence does indeed receive, limit, and constrict being; it also shows that it is not only the essence that is posited, but being as entity—that is, as res—is always already co-posited with it. The "substance" is therefore the "proprium susceptivum eius quod est esse." But what does it mean that "substantia est proprium susceptivum eius quod est esse" or "substantia completa est susceptivum ipsius esse"?[51] This statement says that what is at issue for being in the movement of finitization is being itself and, since to be does not subsist, what is at issue is its finite subsistence as ens. Thomas thus says, "Since to be made terminates in beings it belongs properly to that to which it belongs *per se* to be, namely, to a *subsistent thing*."[52] But if the essence proceeds according to the whole of its nature from being's movement into subsistence, insofar as being "comes to itself" through the essence, and if, moreover, the procession of the essence, its being posited, is nevertheless the same as being's transnihilation, then the procession and the positing of the essence (in its unitas per se ipsam) can be determined solely as the positive establishment of the "*whole*" *entity*, since "next to" the essence and "next to" the concrete substance, being *is* "nothing"; that is, it is *ipsum esse subsistens*. This is why Thomas says, "The word 'ens,' which is ascribed to a thing on the basis of esse itself, expresses the same thing as the word attributed to it on the basis of the essence."[53]

It is not a dynamized essence, but rather the concrete substance, that receptively stretches itself out to being. The substantial independence of the recipient is a witness to the fact that to be, as non subsistens, has always already "given itself over," that it does not cling to itself, but is always already concrete entity. It shows, moreover, that being is therefore not received by some foreign "other," in order, in a subsequent moment, to subject this other to its sovereignty and to undermine its presumed "autonomy" ["*Eigenstand*"]. In this case, being would be burdened with negation—that is, with an impotence with respect to this alien reality—and thus depotentiated by it. Being is not depotentiated by the fact that the always already "autonomous" substance receives it; instead, the independence of the recipient substance is precisely a witness to the fullness and positivity of being. *It is not the depotentiating of the finite substance in its freestanding independence* (which is receptive to being) *that makes evident that the substance has received everything without remainder and that being is the grounding ground;* instead, the boundless dependence of the finite thing on being and God comes to expression nowhere more radically than in its subsistence. Because to be cannot be hypostasized, since it is not a mere concept, it, as pure gift, makes manifest the infinite *autarkia* of the giver and liberates the entity, which is called a being by virtue of this gift, to an autonomy that approaches in similarity to God, according to the measure of perfection proper to the entity.

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[51] Cf. *SCG* 2.55; *De pot.* 3.1.12: "That which is made is the thing that subsists."

[52] *De pot.* 3.1.12. Or: "For being properly belongs to that which has esse, and this is that thing which subsists in its esse," *ST* 1.45.4. Or: "to be made and to be created belong properly to the subsisting thing alone," *ST* 1.45.8; "To be created properly applies to subsisting things," *De ver.* 27.3.9.

[53] *Met.* 4.2.558.

But Thomas expresses the radical nihilation of being in the following passage: "for even though a thing's existence is other than its essence, it should not be understood to be something added to its essence after the manner of an accident, but something constituted, as it were, by the principles of the essence. Hence the term "being," which is applied to a thing by reason of its very existence, designates the same thing [!] as the term which is applied to it by reason of its essence."[54] "The thing's esse is constituted, as it were, by the principles of the essence" does not mean that the essence constructs being in itself. For in this case the positing of the essence would be separated from the procession of the essence from being, while the latter would be grasped as radically subordinated [*Ausgeliefertheit*] to the principle that is what first "helps" being to achieve unity with itself. Thinking is only too easily tempted to see being as something that has arisen from the principle of the essence, since the essence does not in any case have its unity *per participationem, sicut accidit de ente et de bono.*[55] What results is the danger of fixing the essence a priori as the foundation of being [*Seinsbasis*]. Because being, in obedience to the sense of being, releases the essence from itself in the decision of its crisis, the positivity of the essence can never be isolated as something existing in itself. If it were, then being would no longer be seen as fullness, and the negation of the *non subsistens* would be absolutized in a radical dynamism toward being's subsistence. Being would have wholly and completely collapsed into the essence.

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[54] *Met.* 4.2.558.

[55] *De ver.* 21.5.8. It is our belief that this temptation lies at the roots of all essentialist metaphysics, which attributes "actuality" immediately to the essence on the basis of the unitas per se ipsam. "Therefore, since essence indicates, of itself, a certain actuality that lies outside of esse, there cannot be any third nature arising from essence and esse. Instead, it will be said above that essentia contributes a certain actuality, even though this actuality is not such that it would be able to exist without esse." *Aegidii Romani Theoremata de Esse et Essentia*, ed. Hocedez (Louvain, 1930), Theor. 6, p. 29.

There is no need to point out that this is the origin of all nominalism, which emphasizes being in its nonsubsistence and thus hands being over to essence as what brings it to itself. The positive res acquires an excessive significance.[56] Along with this, nominalism moreover exaggerates the voluntas divina, insofar as it is not directed to the dimension of being as being, but rather to the esse in rebus.[57] The sovereignty of the *non subsistens* in the movement of finitization reveals God as absolute voluntas. In this case, what stands in the beginning is no longer the Word, but now the Deed, according to the "German translation" of the Gospel of John that one finds in Goethe's *Faust*.

But let us now follow where the matter leads!

The nonsubsistence of being must be increasingly intensified, the more that the positing of the essence stands forth in the *unitas per se ipsam*. One can also say that exaggerating the positing of essence implies the absolutizing of the "nothing" in the crisis of being. It is important to ponder this. We will later bring out more clearly the relationship between nihilism (which has its roots in this absolutizing of the "nothing" in the crisis of being) and essentialistic thinking.

Despite the temptation to slip into essentialism, one has to say that the positive establishment of the reality of the finite ens can be determined speculatively only if the non subsistens comes to expression in a fitting manner. The positive emergence of the ens in the positing of the essence always already precedes every speculative unfolding as "given and accessible." Because "substantia est proprium susceptivum eius, quod est esse," it follows that being and essence are always already posited in a single reality and fused together in an abiding unity in the "aspect of reality."

But we are reflecting on what is being said here about the positivity of the *ens*: "*Ens* dicitur quasi esse habens, hoc autem solum est substantia, quae subsistit."[58] In other words, the positive givenness of reality, although it results from being's transnihilation, nevertheless can never surrender the openness of the "*esse* habens"; in other words, the positive reality as such, which receives its name from the essence,[59] may never be made into the terminus of being's movement of subsistence, that is, of *creation*.

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[56] Cf. W. Ockham, *Summa totius Logicae* III, II, cap. 27: "That the entity and existence are not two things. Instead, the two words 'res' and 'esse' signify one and the same thing."

[57] For "knowledge is of things as they exist in the knower, but the will is directed to things as they exist in themselves" (*ST* 1.19.3.6). This applies also to the voluntas divina: "things proceed into being whenever the divine will determines"; cf. *De ver*. 2.14.2.

[58] *Met*. 12.1; cf. also *ST* 1.45.4.

The positing of essence, which opens up nothing other than the positive emergence of the finite reality in the positing of the ens, is also the basis for the name we give to the always already posited "abiding" unity of the principles of the finite entity: the ontological moment called "*reality*."[60] We will see later that the process of thinking may never allow itself to get stuck in the positive reality if it is to avoid collapsing into essentialism and absolutizing the "nothing" that belongs to the crisis of being. The path of thinking will continue beyond the aspect of reality, without in the least dissolving it into the aspect of being's bonicity; this latter aspect, as we shall see, is the central one from which we are able wholly and completely to carry through in speculation both the manifestness of being as verum and the weight of the positing of the positive res. But at this point we have only indicated all of this in a provisional way.

Excursus: The Problem of the "Positive Reality" from a Theological Perspective

It is worthwhile, here, to take a brief excursion into theology because of the importance of the matter. We must always keep in mind that we never experience the grace of God that we receive in faith as something that comes to use from outside of being [*jenseits des Seins*], but always instead along the "path of being." The enacted conception of being; which we have sought to sketch out in broad strokes, therefore always enters into the theological mode of thinking in a way that bears determinatively on that mode.

With respect to the question we just posed about the positing of the positive reality on the basis of being's transnihilation, we may therefore say, in theological terms, that the more originarily we grasp the incarnation of the Logos (on the basis of the exinanitio), the more insistently the *posited*, or the *instituted* [*gesetzte*], constitution (res) of the obedient space in which the incarnation abides in its essence [*seines hörigen Wesenraumes*]—that is, the more the Church, in the Holy Spirit—comes to light (Petrus: Rock [!]).

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[59] "The name of the thing expresses the essence of the entity." *De ver.* 1.1.

[60] Cf. also Siewerth, *Der Thomismus als Identitätssystem*, 93. Siewerth conceives creation as the positing of reality and the essence of reality as the "terminus of creation" (cf. 144*ff.*).

The "Spirit" does not hold sway beyond the "established" [*"gesetzten"*] institution (Church as structure of the Logos), just as, moreover, the necessary sense of being (bonitas) does not hold sway outside of the essence but becomes manifest precisely *in* the positing of essence. The binding of the "Spirit" to the structure of essence, the posited and essentiell constitution of the Church, which thus continues to preserve into the future [*fort-währende*] what it has been given, is dissolved to the extent that the self-emptying enactment gets stopped up in the pseudo-hypostasis of a self-withholding Logos, which goes hand in hand with the substantializing of being in the vacillation. In this case, the positivity of the reality, the factically concrete ecclesia, gets detached from the "invisible" (integral) Church. In modern metaphysics, the essentiell-institutionell aspect of the Church is overemphasized in conjunction with the submerging of being in the essence (or the positive reality). In this case, it would have to be liberated into its spiritual superessentiality and spiritual depth by the merely subjective act of faith, just as being is liberated by the subject in the speculative enactment of the mediation of the substance (Hegel).

But just as being itself was able to be posited at the beginning of the mediation only as a concept "in intellectu" praeter res and thus fell under the control of the subject as potency, so the radicalization of the grace that has been isolated as the absolute mediator in relation to God ends up collapsing into the material of a theological neopelagianism. All the same, we have to affirm that emphasizing *esse non subsistens* as the "kenotic, incarnational moment" of being's movement of subsistence toward the res only too easily dissolves the ontological difference between being and beings; it leaves the difference behind itself, makes it a "thing of the past," and so also renders the Church's "history" something over and done with, thus closing up the salvation-historical difference, through which the Holy Spirit blows in the wait for the Lord's return. The Holy Spirit's rule gets tethered in an absolute way to the historical essence, the "essentialized past," of the incarnation; it gets "logicized" and spurns the God of the advent. Man is thereby tempted not to suffer *with* Jesus in the Holy Spirit "what remains of the sufferings of Christ," but to establish an already given, a new and complete, "paradisiacal state" in the world by means of force and to make himself its goal. He then speaks the word, gives expression to the "immanent eschaton," precisely by means of a theological a priori, and so he fuses grace with nature from the outset in an absolute manner.

c. The Positing of Reality and the Real Distinction as the Root of the Distinctio Rationis of the Principles

In order to get a more precise view of the positing of reality, we will have to explore briefly the "intrinsic" relation between esse and "existence." Because we are trying to elucidate a traditional legacy from the perspective of being's movement of finitization, what we have in view here is not the *ek-sistere* of the *intellectus* capax *entis*, into being, but rather the existere as the actus essendi of beings.

Admittedly, we have to reflect, already at this point, on the fact that finite reason's enactment of being's movement into subsistence includes within itself in an utterly profound way the letting be of beings, even though reason at the same time is never able to base this letting be on a hypostasis of being contra deum. A speculative illumination of the *existere* as the concrete thing's actus essendi nevertheless requires reason's opening up into being as its condition of possibility.

Existence is the concrete entity's actus essendi and thus designates the same thing as esse as actus, which enters into subsistence from out of the transnihilation of its crisis. Existence as such does not exist, because being and "nothing" exchange themselves for one another: we may say, with Gilson, that *L'existence n'existe pas.*[61] *Ipsum autem esse est quo substantia est,*[62] or "the actus essendi of the substance is the act of existence (*Existenzakt*)." We can also unproblematically affirm existence in the place of being, for "when [a form] has esse it becomes actually existent."[63]

But we misunderstand the sameness of esse and existence if we fail to note that esse is not at all a kind of *efficiens*, or efficient cause. If we were to think of esse in the sense of an *efficiens*, then existence would immediately be set as a "participle" (!) in the place of contradiction, and esse would be "participially" structured by the character of a continuously abiding persistence. This would represent a transposition of the always already abiding positive reality, which is determined on the basis of the persisting essence into the crisis of being. Indeed, what the positive reality, which is an aspect of being's unfolding, refers to is also the "participially abiding state" of the posited being. The absolutizing of the positive reality into a determinative horizon for the speculative unfolding of being leads inescapably to the notion of existence as "permanence."

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[61] "Limites Existentielles," 69. See also Gilson, *L'Etre et l'Essence*, chap. 3, 78*ff.*, esp. 109*ff.*

[62] *ST* 1.50.2.3.

[63] *De pot.* 7.2.9.

From all we have seen thus far, it becomes immediately clear that the distinctio rationis between esse and essence has its ground in the distinctio realis, for the positive reality receives its measure entirely from the crisis of being, which is set forth, in the movement of subsistence, in the procession and positing of the essence, and demonstrates its entire metaphysical significance in the positive emergence of the "reality." In the ontological moment of reality, nevertheless, esse and essence are always already fused in a unity, so that if this moment were isolated as something in itself, we would end up with nothing more than a distinctio rationis for the speculative act.

But esse and essence are really distinct because the ipsum esse in the crisis is not reflected in a substantial unity with itself, which is why we can affirm the creative emergence [*Durchstoß*] of the positive reality.

The distinctio realis of the principles does not imply any depotentiating of being so long as we do not claim, at the same time, that the essence is *only* posited and deny that this positing is the same thing as the *procession of the essence* out of being—in other words, so long as we do not deny that being, precisely on account of its convertibility with the "nothing," is "actus actuum and perfectio omnium perfectionum." If we absolutize the "nothing" in this way, then we overemphasize the positive givenness of the essence and therefore essentialize being. The distinctio rationis between esse and essence is thus entirely legitimate in relation to this speculative root, so long as we keep in view the aspect of the moment of the always already posited unity of the principles. Indeed, we can go so far as to say that we fail to see the real distinction of the principles with sufficient speculative clarity if we do not see the positive reality.

However, the positive reality gets eliminated if it is not established on the basis of the real distinction of the principles in the enactment of the movement of subsistence. Indeed, the real distinction is the reason for the distinctio rationis between the principles. If the positive reality, or the speculative step toward the positive reality in the enactment of being's movement of subsistence, is nevertheless taken to be the end of the speculative unfolding, and the crisis of being along with the positive reality is no longer determined on the basis of the abyss of bonitas—that is, on the basis of being's superessentiality—then the distinctio rationis of the principles loses its meaning. We see this in Suarez.[64] Reason is then compelled by the speculative a priori—that is, by the modus of its specific obedience to being—to determine being, in the foregrasp, as mere conceptus and in reaction to this conceptus to absorb the entity in the res and to bear all the consequences implied by this that we attempted to demonstrate above in the section "The Good, 'Pneumatic Reason,' and the Necessary Sense of Being."

Let us ask further: "What does it mean to posit reality if we focus solely on the positing of essence?"

In the first place, it means that we must derive the establishment of the positive reality in all its distinctiveness and proper reality from the positing of essence alone. Although it is true that the positing of the essence is the same as the positing of the entity, insofar as esse and essence are always already fused together in the reality, we must nevertheless recall that the positing of the essence proceeds solely from being's self-emptying—as the "obedient space" of being's transnihilation.

The essence is not posited for its own sake but rather for the sake of the necessary sense of being, which orders being into finitude. Being allows the essence to proceed from it, because what is most profoundly at issue for reason in its foregrasp of being as being is "finitude." The essence that is posited exclusively in itself, by virtue of its own nature, rejects being as actus actuum, just as being would fail to take its kenosis seriously if it did not let the essence proceed "from itself." The negation that belongs to the procession, reason's speculative "yes" to being's transnihilation, is already the manifestation of the fullness of being, while the pseudo-fullness of the ontological vacillation would, by contrast, have to be provoked to empty itself by the self-enclosed essence. Being would in this case immediately collapse into helplessness and passivity with respect to the essence. What corresponds, "in God," to this fragmented essence that radically depotentiates being ("within" the ontological difference of the movement into subsistence), however, is the essence that stands forth within the divine intellect as *possibile esse*,[65] which gradually begins to affect God, to depotentiate him, and thus to provoke the absolutized voluntas divina. What we need in this case is the negation of the negation! The being of God, of the Absolute, then becomes the "nonbeing of the finite" (Hegel). The finite and self-enclosed essence thus brings finite reason to the absolute in such a way that reason can determine the absolute only as an Ens that has not yet been mediated. The breaking forth of the enclosed essence in the finite as what enables being's mediation into subsistence is then the same thing as the deconstruction of the absolute Ens in the negation of negation: God's breaking forth as "Spirit" and "Love."

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[64] On Suarez's conception of being, see Ulrich, *Inwiefern ist die Konstruktion*. esp. chap. 1: "Die Konstruktion der Substanzkonstitution als Realitätsetzung bei Suarez."

[65] Cf. Ulrich, *Inwiefern ist die Konstruktion*, chap. 2: "Die Substanzkonstitution bei Scotus als Explication der Idealität des Seins," . . . possibile, creabile, creatum.

VI

The Unfolding of Being in the Three Ontological Moments of Reality, Ideality, and Bonicity

We have now arrived at a decisive point in the speculative exposition of the phases of being's movement of finitization. The crisis of being opened up in the procession and positing of essence out of being and the principles came back together in the positive reality that was always already given [*gesetzt*]. The ontological dimension of ideality and reality has thereby become explicit.

But the positive reality can never be isolated; it can never, so to speak, be exclusively "posited" within the realm of the self-unified essence without destroying itself, just as being becomes enfeebled into a mere potency-to-be if it is suspended in the static crisis of ideality. It is only with respect to a constantly renewed obedience to the necessary sense of being, which is rooted in bonitas, that we overcome both the distress of the contradiction in ideality and the essentializing of being in reality; conversely, the self-enclosed res always speculatively includes within itself the hypostasizing of being in the vacillation.

This is why the enactment of being's progressive movement through the phases culminates in the moment of bonicity, in which both the positivity of reality and the crisis of being in ideality are preserved and sealed.

1. Ideating [*Ideeierende*] Reason and the Ideality of Being in the Dimension of the Movement of Finitization

A. The Ambiguity of the "Nothing" as Reason's Basic Measure [*Maßgrund*]

Thomas says that "there is nothing outside of being except nonbeing."[1] If speculative reason therefore "ideates" being as being in the crisis, then in a certain sense it possesses nothing "outside of" being other than nonbeing; reason does not even possess itself as concretely subsisting. From the very first steps of thought's movement, we were immediately exposed to the variety of temptations that beset us when reason enters into its excessus. The most originary is a constant temptation for reason to see being in ideality as hypostasized self-sameness in order to affirm the non ens as "external" and to ensure being's positivity—in other words, to forego the speculative undergoing of the crisis of being. But because finite reason concretely subsists prior to any foregrasp into being as being—that is, because reason is not "nothing" (non subsistens)—it would have to destroy its concrete subsistence in the speculative foregrasp out toward being if it wanted to take hold of the pure "nothing" juxtaposed to being.[2] But the only thing that concerns it in all this is "just" the positivity of being! Finite reason would in this case have made itself God, who as ipsum esse subsistens has "nothing" next to him. In this way, thinking claims being as being for itself and thinks that it is therefore able to distinguish between being and nothing, bonum and malum (non ens), insofar as being and nothing exchange themselves for each other in the ideal vacillation. It is when thinking ceases to obey the necessary sense of being implied in the exinanitio that it no longer enacts the self-finitizing of being. The moment it does, reason posits the "pure nothing" next to itself.

But let us go deeper! "Being is more interior to every thing than that by which being is determined," that is, than the principles of essence.[3] Therefore reason, as capax *entis* [*seins-vermäßig*] (i.e., as *concrete!*), has to be a superessential space of pure receptivity, detached in a certain sense from determining essentiality in order to be able to "conceive" being in its superessentiality. On the basis of such a detachment, reason is then grasped as empty, "unformed" [*"entformter"*] spirit, which does not come to a standstill outside of being in order to enter into being from that starting point, but has always already been with being—it always already "belongs together" with being in its foregrasp into it. Reason therefore always appears to be elevated into the truth of being, above the res, the name of which derives from the *essence*, and above the understanding that is still trapped in the dimension of the essence. In this sense, it becomes a de-essentialized reason that transcends every res, which means that it has always already opened the positive reality up into the ontological difference. But one might therefore be misled into thinking that reason, as thus de-essentialized, empty, and "void" [*"nichtigen"*], presents the standard that allows being the "possibility"—and here is where the ambiguity begins—of unveiling its positivity, since reason so to speak has an a priori immunity to substantializing or essentializing being. In this way, we hope to overcome the danger of fixing being, whether it be in the positive reality (res subsistens) or in ideality (the hypostasis of being), insofar as both aspects are burst open by a reason that intends being in its *pure positivity* by virtue of the "nothingness" of its content. But to the extent that this positivity is revealed in being's sameness with itself or in the "adequacy to being" [*"Seinsgemäßheit"*] (bonum!), "empty reason" is energized by the appetitus for precisely this selfsameness of being in its "adequacy to being." Because as such "empty" reason adds "nothing" that would be external to being, it now allows being as being to affirm itself in its selfsameness, which means to decide in favor of itself [*sich zu sich entscheiden*] in the movement into sub-sistence, or to claim itself in the "void ob-ject" of reason, which drives being beyond the res into pure ideality. The "gift" [*"Gabe"*] character of being, which has always already expropriated itself, or handed itself over in the "task" of its "self-gift" [*"Selbstaufgabe"*], now finds itself challenged. It is tested, in order to see whether it is able to "give itself over," whether it might not in fact be able to be something else, whether the bonitas divina, which holds sway in the necessary sense of being that orders being into finitude, might "perhaps have meant being in some other way." The dimension of the movement of finitization, the ontological difference, enters into reflection in its critical mode; it is objectified and elevated into the absolute theme of reason's self-certainty. Thought's trust in being disappears. Being as self-giving love now comes under the judgment of "empty reason," which measures all things, the reason that brings the crisis of being into its reflection, places the exinanitio of ipsum esse in question in a fundamental way, and tests it according to its own measure.

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[1] *De pot.* 7.2.9.

[2] Interpreted theologically, this says the same as Kierkegaard's observation: "True knowing has to begin with non-knowing, in the same way that God created the world out of nothing." *Selbstbekenntnisse von Gilleleie*, August 1, 1835.

[3] Cf. 2 *Sent.* 1.1.4.

To objectify the movement of finitization, to hypostasize the crisis of being into a field in which reason subjects the love of God to the judgment of reflection, is inevitably to make being a substance. Reason's capacity to weigh things through critical reflection takes priority over its receptive obedience to being, and reflection judges the exinanitio to be uncertain and in need of reflection's own judgment in order to be ratified as certain. In this case, love would have to be legitimized through an act of reason's reflection; indeed, bonitas, as the moment in which petrified being is broken open and overcome in both ideality and in reality, would become adequate to reflection itself, or, in other words, to the sublation of the substance in the *concept*. But in this endeavor, being is hardened into an immediate beginning *prior* to its subsistence, even if it is only in the moment of reflection's determination in the process of thinking, in order "then" to attain subsistence. "Simple immediacy [i.e., 'pure being'] is itself an expression of reflection and is related to the difference from what is mediated."[4] This difference of immediate being from what is mediated has to be posited in order to set the speculative mediation in motion, even though immediate being *is already given as mediated* in "logic" as "pure knowledge in the entire range of its development" (given, i.e., as result).[5] Despite this, knowing, "as concentrated into unity,"[6] has sublated every relationship with respect to what is mediated and has "once again" become immediate. Only now can the exposition of the "logic" be carried out as a speculative procession into mediation—that is, into the movement into subsistence—which the "concept" represents in spirit's reflection, whereby being "turns itself into essence," "presupposes essence," and is "inwardly re-collected (*er-innert*)" by means of the essence[7]—and therefore mediated. "The beginning therefore is *pure being*."[8] "The objective logic, which contemplates *being* and *essence*, thus constitutes the proper *genetic exposition of the concept*."[9] Being's transnihilation is thus determined, insofar as the "nothing" as *non subsistens* is presented to being as the standard by which its self-surrender is measured. The "nothing" (non subsistens), which gives proof of the bonitas divina, is equated with de-essentialized emptiness, the "nothing," of *reason*. The non subsistens, and thereby the bonitas divina, is first determined by reason in relation to the exininatio of being insofar as this is identified with being as being and, as pneumatic reason, is liquefied into the "ether" of being's witness to its own positivity. Love has turned into absolute reflection.

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[4] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1969), 69.

[5] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 69.

[6] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 69.

[7] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 389, translation slightly modified.

[8] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 389.

[9] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 577, translation slightly modified.

At bottom, this is a denial of being's positivity, a "fixing" of the gift of being as something to be grasped, which reason must first "achieve," as it were, by means of absolute reflection. The being that "*clings to itself*" in the vacillation before its movement of finitization is secretly presupposed in defiance of the true transnihilation, the genuine obedience of being, which has always already been carried out. The exinanitio is used as a *means* of *self-testimony*, while in reality being does not empty itself. The labor, the pain, the patience, and the seriousness of thought's kenosis in obedience to being are all simulated. Despite the "speculative Good Friday," being remains reduced to logic. Being's breakthrough to superessentiality founders, even though it is just thought's attempt to free itself that constitutes the innermost dynamic of this path of thought.

We believe that Hegel gives in to this temptation, in his titanic effort to think the being that has been hardened in abstraction against its nonsubsistence in the negation of this negation (non subsistens) in a speculatively concrete manner by unleashing the pneuma inside reason. The "incarnative concretion," or, more specifically, the incarnative concretion that was petrified into a merely positive res, was supposed to be mediated in turn and sublated in the ether of this spirit. In reality, as we have shown many times, the "spirit" was completely logicized in this endeavor, and thus the *Geschick* of the modern substantializing of being was brought to its conclusion. The forgetfulness of being that characterizes this history of thought is thus most profoundly unveiled in the violence [*Zwang*] done to being by the "pro-ject" of the nihilating emptiness of reason. In the most profound depths of this *Geschick* lies the question of whether man is ultimately not able to do something that God has "withheld" from him. In theological terms, this means: The proposition "you may not eat from the tree that stands in the center" represents the "protecting" of an area that God "withholds" from man. Satan tempts man to reflect upon what he is unable to do, so that man, by reflecting on whether the bonitas divina might not in fact have had something else in mind, casts the veil of "non-gift" over the "area withheld by God," which man must then come and take. When he does, reason makes God into an absolute, self-enclosed essence, an essence that causes a self-withholding being—many powerful perspectives open up from this point!

In all of this, however, there is a final, great temptation, which lies hidden in an abyssal ambiguity that drives thought into reflective doubt [as "double-thought," *Zweifel*]: whether *intellectus capax entis* "truly" owes absolute obedience to the necessary sense of being—whether subsistence might not be possible without obedience to the necessary sense of being in the movement of finitization—whether being might not avoid the exinanitio of the movement of finitization, and subsistence be possible in the ideal vacillation—whether there might not be in fact an absolute "beginning" for finite reason in the place of being's ideal mediation—whether reason might not in fact have the resources in itself to allow being to be pure positivity ... ?[10]

If thinking does not remain subservient to the necessary sense of being, which has always already decided the crisis, so that the bonitas can never be dissolved in a mediating reflection of reason between ideality and reality, if it does not betake itself into the pull of being's movement of finitization, then being is left in its crisis (!) of pure positivity on the basis of the measure of absolute nonbeing, and thus of a pure fiction "made up" by reason. In other words, the negation of the finite entity can be determined in an absolute sense only if it elevates being itself—as we saw above—to a fixed place of speculation by means of the freedom that abstracts from all things, "in order to posit the pure simplicity of thinking" (Hegel). To the extent that it does, being's pure positivity is dissolved into a mere conceptus *praeter res existentes in intellectu solum*.

But being and "nothing" exchange themselves for one another by virtue of the bonitas divina. If, then, finite reason appropriates this necessary sense of being for itself, if it identifies the bonitas divina with the dimension of being's ideality (taken in isolation), then it forces God to decide in favor of the hypostasis of being set against God. But this means that reason would affirm itself in the fact that it is capable, on its own, of bringing about the circumincession of being and "nothing" into subsistence, of placing itself beyond being and "nothing," bonum and malum, and setting up its kingdom against God. We can connect all of this, then, with what was laid out in Part A, chapter IV.5, in this volume.

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[10] Christian revelation as the theological a priori of the thinking of being comes to expression here in an especially poignant way in the completion of Western metaphysics.

But Thomas says, "It is impossible for any created being to be perfectly the act and likeness of all beings, for, thus, it would possess the nature of being in an infinite manner. Hence, only God can understand all things by Himself and without any addition. But every created intellect understands through some species given it."[11]

B. The Absolute Step to Reality and Ideality through the Neutralizing of the Necessary Sense of Being

Our exposition has shown that the ontological moment of bonitas can never have its place in reason's reflection alone, in the resolution of the contradiction, or in the emergence of the essentiell fixing of being in ideality and reality. If it did, then love, which aims at the goodness that exists in things, would be absorbed into the act of reason and would become a function of the speculatively concretizing spirit. If substance is sublated in the subject's self-enactment—that is, in the resolution of the contradiction of "empty being"—the mediation of the res and of the as-yet-abstract verum would be transplanted into bonum's superessentiality and have their seal in the "concept's" self-exposition as the inner form of the movement into subsistence. The perfectly exhibited "concept" would be identical with perfectly and fully generated subjectivity, and this subjectivity would attain its consummate form in the radical measuring out of the ontological difference.

While the entire effort in this endeavor is directed to the negation of the negation (non subsistens), the speculative a priori nevertheless culminates in the logicizing of love. But Hegel can say, "It is essentially only spirit that can comprehend the concept as concept; for this is not merely the property of spirit but spirit's pure self."[12]

Just as thinking can fall prey to a misinterpretation of reality, which ensnares being in "pure finitude," in its pursuit of the reditio of the being that the speculative foregrasp mediated "through the essence" into the concrete subsistence, which Hegel called a "self-recollection" ["*Sich-erinnern*"], so too can thinking stray in the speculative interpretation of being's coming to itself when it grasps the essence as nothing more than a "passageway" that being uses to come "to itself." In this case, the *esse completum et simplex* gets exaggerated, being gets fixed in essentiell univocity prior to the kenosis, and thinking becomes uncertain in the ambiguity that asks, "What exactly does it mean to say that there is a transnihilation of something completum et simplex? The simplex after all proceeds from the transnihilation as a simplex; it can't lose its simplicity in the transnihilation, but must always remain itself in this simplicity!"

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[11] *De ver.* 20.2.

[12] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 618.

A thinking that has moored itself in self-withholding being in the vacillation and doesn't allow the circumincession of being and "nothing" to come to decision on its own must therefore necessarily cast the veil of ambiguity over all existing things insofar as the radicality of the transnihilation, in which the positivity of being and the loving presence of God is revealed to us, is neutralized: We thus find at every turn a "Yes and No at once." Obedience to the necessary sense of being is rejected.

The ensnarement of a reason reduced to mere ratio in the dimension of the factically existing, self-enclosed res, and the rooting of reason in the *ens indifferens* (ens qua ens) are simply two sides of the same process, which eliminates the positivity of being as love. The absolute step toward reality and ideality always stems from the dissolution of the necessary sense of being—that is, of the ontological moment of bonicity—whereby the ontological difference is displaced in its "superessential" unequivocal decisiveness by the ambiguity of the "Yes and No at once."

c. Toward the Indifferentiation of the Necessary Sense of Being

The metaphysical center of the necessity of being thus has its seal in a moment of being that lies beyond ideality, but without being simply identical to reality. The temptation that lies in wait for the speculative unfolding of the bonum consists in having the bonitas force its way into the ideal sphere of being—that is, into the explicitness of its crisis—and in this way substantialize being prior to the movement of finitization.

Let us say it once again! It is false to think that finite reason allows being to be simple, pure positivity, reality, and simplicity, if (!) it attempts to mediate being with itself already in the crisis in its selfsameness, and does not experience being's positivity and necessity on the basis of its finitization. Otherwise, we would necessarily have to presuppose that being can be set over *against* its *non subsistens* and poured out into the concrete through "pneumatic reason." Being and "nothing" would in this case remain juxtaposed to one another a priori and it would no longer be the abundantia of the bonitas divina that enables their convertibility; instead, it would be finite reason that instigates it. In this way, we fail to receive "being and nothing" as a "gift," as Heidegger puts it in his "On the Question of Being."[13]

In this text, Heidegger is concerned with the "crisis of being." The following passages seem to point in this direction: "Accordingly, a thoughtful look ahead into this realm can write 'being' only in the following way: ~~being~~. The crossing out of this word initially has only a preventive role, namely, that of preventing the almost ineradicable habit of representing 'being' as something standing somewhere on its own that then on occasion first comes face-to-face with human beings."[14] This is certainly true! But then a shadow passes over this affirmation: "However, he [man] is not only not excepted, i.e., not only included in 'being,' but 'being,' in needing the human being, is obliged to relinquish this appearance of independence."[15] The expression "~~being~~" means nothing other than "esse significat aliquid completum et simplex, sed non subsistens." Being surrenders its "for-itself" character in the transnihilation, which means in carrying out its movement of finitization. Once we develop the notion, later on, that man represents the focal point of the movement of finitization, we will be able to make proper sense of the following passage: "but 'being,' in needing the human being, is obliged to relinquish this appearance of independence." Immediately after this,[16] however, Heidegger writes: "As that being which is in essence brought into the need of ~~being~~, the human being is part of the zone of ~~being~~, i.e., at the same time of the nothing." "Like ~~being~~, the nothing would also have to be written—and that means, thought—in the same way." But we ask, doesn't "~~being~~" already mean that being is a *non subsistens*, that it can't come to a standstill in the ideal vacillation? Why, then, is it necessary that there also be the "nothing" "next" to it? Wouldn't this mean that we are once again setting the *completum et simplex* and the *non subsistens* apart from each other, even though it is said that being and the nothing exchange themselves for each other?[17] Later we will see how the exclusive relation of being to the "needed human essence" inevitably holds being in the vacillation and being is thereby "preserved" a priori against the non subsistens of its exinanitio even if it is only in the moment of a determination of reflection. It becomes inevitable that following this path would keep us from posing the question of God—that is, the sublation of difference in God[18]—in its ultimate incisiveness. The speculative unfolding of the crisis of being, the "critical zone" of which Heidegger speaks, which is given to man and wherein he is himself given, can come about only for *that* thinking which opens itself up to, and unlocks, the necessary sense of being.

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[13] Martin Heidegger, "On the Question of Being," in *Pathmarks*, trans. William McNeil (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 317.

[14] Heidegger, "On the Question of Being," 310.

[15] Heidegger, "On the Question of Being," 310.

[16] Heidegger, "On the Question of Being," 311.

If Heidegger writes, "'The human being holds the place of the nothing.' This sentence says that the human being holds free the locale for that which is quite other than beings, so that within this openness something like coming to presence (being) can be given,"[19] then we have to reflect here on the uncanny ambiguity that comes upon finite reason insofar as it allows the "nothing"—indeed, its own "nothing" (as the fundamental measure of the speculative unfolding)—to exchange itself with being, in order thereby to bear witness to the appropriating event of being as gift of absolute love, indeed, to achieve certainty with respect to this event. If man is the "place-holder of the nothing," then one would have to affirm with the same resoluteness that man apprehends being as being, even though this is not in fact true. In this we see man's almost unavoidable temptation to grab hold of the place of the crisis of being and, in this crisis, to logicize the bonum in advance, the bonum to which love points. But this means circumventing the pain of kenosis that being undergoes in becoming finite.

This speculative a priori, however, cannot allow the sublation of the ontological difference, in which being's self-finitizing comes into play, to be speculatively determined as the difference that has always already been sublated in the act of God's absolute life. The reason it cannot is that the bonitas divina has in this case "not yet" radically made its presence felt in the crisis of being. In other words, being in ideality gets reflected *against* absolute love in a reality that exists for its own sake. This speculative a priori still stands in the

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[17] Cf. Heidegger, "On the Question of Being," 317.

[18] Cf. "The Movement into Subsistence and the Sublation of the Ontological Difference in God's Absolute Identity" in Part A, chapter IV, this volume.

[19] Heidegger, "On the Question of Being," 316–17.

Geschick of modern metaphysics, which is most profoundly characterized by the logicizing of the "spirit."

This is also why God cannot be named, because it is impossible to speak adequately about the "crisis" or, in Heidegger's words, "over the line" [*über die Linie*],[20] within the horizon of the logicized bonitas, even if it is said that being and the "nothing" mutually exchange themselves for each other.

One can't get beyond the ideal vacillation of being in a merely "historical progression" of the movement of thought, a progression that is in turn grasped only historically, even if one adds that being itself is what allows this movement of thought to occur in history.

The only thing that can successfully undergo the crisis of being is an obedience to being here and now: the one who listens obediently, however, is the one who *thinks "essentially"* in the proper sense of the word, insofar as the essence is the subservient space of being in its act of obedience to its necessary sense of being. To be sure, an abyssal dimension opens up here that needs to be speculatively unfolded, a dimension that Heidegger sees profoundly when he says, "Correctly thought, oblivion, the concealing of the as yet unrevealed essence (in the verbal sense of essential unfolding) of ~~being~~, shelters untapped treasures and is the promise of a find that awaits only the appropriate seeking."[21] What he has in mind here is nothing other than the thematic of the movement of finitization.

D. The Unfolding of Being in Light of Supernatural Revelation

Many times along our path of thinking we have found ourselves forced to transcend the unfolding of being in the direction of supernatural revelation, since grace cannot but arrive along the "path of being." We lose the ability to understand the relation between being and revelation once the ens is sealed up inside the res and being is determined on the basis of *just this res*, which already a priori (because of its finitude) has *to be negated* (in the closedness of its autonomy *set against* God). In this case, being can be only an empty concept. This was the legacy that late scholasticism left to Reformation theology.

Now, Thomas says, "Since therefore the created intellect is naturally capable of apprehending ... the concrete esse abstractedly, by way of a kind of resolution of parts; it can by grace be raised up to know … separate subsisting esse."[22] We gained access to this resolutio of reason, however, in the ontological difference, which can never be made something already resolved—that is, "a-thing-of-the-past"—neither in the res, through the radicalizing of the positing of the essence as a positive reality, nor in the crisis of being, through the movement of finitization that has always already been "anticipated" in a way that identifies the moment of bonicity with that of ideality. The "not yet" of the difference, which can never be overtaken, has its seal in the bonitas of being. This is something we must keep clearly in view.

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[20] Heidegger, "On the Question of Being," 309.

[21] Heidegger, "On the Question of Being," 314.

Although the nonsubsistence of to be constantly drives us to the concrete natura subsistens, nevertheless, the "beginning" of the tracing back [*Rück-vollzugs*] of the resolutio is not a linear, reflexively calculable extension of being to the natura, in the sense that the natura would be already something given from the outset in the crisis of being. Being is superessential. Thus a dimension of openness (*potentia oboedientialis*) unveils itself in the intellect that has awoken into being as being, a dimension that corresponds to the dimension of being's superessentiality.

When we speak of the potentia oboedientialis, however, we do not mean a mere passivity on man's part, but rather an openness that results from the concrete *being* of the spirit and therefore is already given in a priori completion [*Vollendung*], which is extended into the superessential and in this sense supernatural "light of being."[23] This light therefore "*is*" not yet the supernatural, because the ipsum esse does not allow itself to be hypostasized beyond concrete nature as ontological vacillation.

Although being can be determined fundamentally and illuminated in its superessentiality only in reason's foregrasp "from out of" ["*aus*"] a concrete nature (it is only the transnihilation in the direction of the positive res that reveals the nonsubstantiality of the ipsum esse), this foregrasp is ultimately possible only if the obedience to being is determined in its opening up to the grace to come (potest per gratiam elevari!). Being's superessentiality has its seal precisely in this openness insofar as the being that lies inside the mere res would always already be circumscribed [*eingeholt*] within the natura, and thus the superessentiality would already be fixed [*festgelegt*] in relation to the essentia. In this case, to be would be eliminated as actus actuum. The intellect that is open to being is therefore immediately ordered to God, so that its fulfillment does not consist only in "what belongs to it in respect of its nature, but also in that which it acquires through a *supernatural* participation of Divine goodness."[24]

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[22] *ST* 1.12.4.3; it must be kept in mind, of course, that Thomas is speaking in this context of the *intellectus angelicus*. But what he says applies in a certain sense also to man (as embodied spirit).

[23] *Esse ad lucem pertinet*. Augustine, *En. in Ps.* 7.19.

Grace must fundamentally arrive along the path of being, because nothing is external to this other than nonbeing, but it is not grace itself that constitutes the superessentiality of being as being, even though grace sets free the thinking that is fixed in the hypostasis of being in the *statu naturae lapsae*, liberating it into being's superessentiality.

Here thinking seems to fall into an unresolvable dilemma! If the speculative foregrasp into superessential being is achieved by natural reason *on its own* and reason overcomes its hubris by *its own* power, then it does not need grace. But this is what would seem to follow from the truth that it is not grace that first constitutes the superessentiality of being as being, because the reason that being has awakened is already released into an openness to being's superessentiality.

But if we deny this and say that grace is necessary, does this mean that we have to think of being stuck a priori in the ontological vacillation as reason's *natural condition*, or in other words that we identify the nature of reason with existence in the *statu naturae lapsae*?

And if we wish to avoid this implication, are we forced to fall back into the first difficulty and say that, because natural reason opens up the dimension of being as being, it is in principle capable of "deducing" grace, which means that grace is no longer given as a free gift from God?

Our discussions of being's movement of finitization give us a clear answer here. Grace can never be identified with being in such a way that it drags being back onto the field of the substantialized vacillation, for this implies the *submersion* of being in the subsisting nature (res), the closing of the ontological difference, and thus the total coincidence of nature and grace. Here, we explore the fundamental reason why theologoumena have become eminently determinative for the way thinking has unfolded in modern metaphysics, which essentializes being. Essentialized thinking of being is necessarily at bottom pseudo-theology. Let us now inquire in to the "why" of this necessity!

Grace clearly has the power to liberate being in its superessentiality in the course of thought's progress through history, and this has indeed happened for anyone who has heard the Word of God in faith and followed it. But if this historically occurring liberation of being's superessentiality by grace gets fixed into an "ontologically constitutive element"—in order now finally to overcome once and for all being's entrapment in the res, the stubbornness and bondage of the finite in its otherness to God, and to bear testimony to the "*immediate potest* in quodcumque possibile" of God in his omnipotence *over against* Greek metaphysics,[25] then grace becomes a metaphysical a priori. Grace, which in a certain sense safeguards the space of being's superessentiality, becomes a constitutive element of being. But because revelation, and thus man's redemption, has fundamentally "occurred," then the resolutio of reason in the ontological difference becomes something that has already been carried out once and for all by virtue of human nature's "always already" having been taken up into the grace of God (here we have the exaggeration of the vertical direction of the incarnation of the Logos!). The not yet of the ontological difference would become something that is in principle closeable by revelation; it is revealed as something "to-be-made-into-a-thing-of-the-past." Grace has therefore in principle measured out the dimension of being as being. On the basis of the coincidence of grace and nature brought about by the substantializing of being, grace-inspired reason can therefore absolutely close the difference and indeed make it into a "concept" of absolute knowledge (cf. the preceding elaborations).

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[24] *ST* 2–2.2.3; cf. *ST.* 2–2.26.3.

But here grace was summoned at the outset of this unfolding in order to set the factical res free, to liberate the reason that is bound to this res and not yet capable of transcending into being as being, so that it gains access to the superessentiality of being out of the quidditas rei materialis. By manifesting the "fullness of time," grace, so to speak, took control of the dimension of being as "pure mediation"; it carried thinking, as it were, over to the *other side* of the ontological difference by means of the redemption, the difference that is supposed to be newly undergone at every moment. Through this process, the ontological difference became in a certain sense objectifiable in its totality and closure, and it entered in this way *thematically* into the development of modern metaphysics, which was thus set on an inevitable path to its culmination in the "absolute system."

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[25] Cf. the author's aforementioned work, *Inwiefern ist die Konstruktion* chapter II, especially the relationship between Duns Scotus and Aristotle.

The history of the Holy Spirit, the "Not Yet" of salvation history, was in this way absorbed into an incarnational "moment" of God's taking on flesh! Here we see once again how the radicalizing of the non subsistens, the finitization of being in the res, the making-a-thing-of-the-past of the difference in the positing of the essence as the fundamental characteristic of all essentialistic metaphysics, all coincide with the Logos-izing of the Holy Spirit.

Of course, in the Logos's exinanitio—that is, in the "second act of creation" (redemption), which raises the first (being's movement into subsistence) up into God and renews it—the ontological hypostasizing of that which opposes God, which disavows the movement of finitization, is ruptured. Ontological obedience to the necessary sense of being has been achieved in the "Son of Man" as the enactment of man's natural reason (!)—and indeed in a definitive way.

As "sublated" in the Holy Spirit, however, the ontological difference is released into the history of the *eschaton*, into the history of the Spirit of precisely this incarnate Logos. The Spirit who pervades the history of the Logos in the wait for Jesus's return makes manifest at the deepest level the fact that the Word of God has truly emptied himself, the exinanitio has been carried out in truth, and the man Jesus of Nazareth, who did not cling to his glory, is the Logos of the Father. He is man and is thus subject to limitation: "He became a man among men. He made himself a saint among saints. And above all he took on the limit and limitation that belongs to the essence of man. Above all the limitation in time and space. And the limitation of division into categories.

If Jesus had been a metaphysical or physical summation of all human virtues, then we wouldn't need the gospels. We wouldn't need any description. We wouldn't need any history. A summation, a maximum, does not have to be described, does not have to be narrated. It doesn't have to be presented. You can simply calculate it."[26]

In this sense, the Spirit of Jesus is the Spirit of this historical limitation in its "opening of limits" to the Lord in his return: not in the sense of a sublation of the concrete historicity in a panlogism of the divine Logos, who would "dispossess" himself of his human nature over the course of the progression of history toward his parousia. No, "this Jesus, who was taken away from you and carried up to heaven, will return from heaven *in the just the same way* as you saw him be lifted up" (Acts 1:11).

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[26] Péguy, *Wir stehen alle an der Front*, 88.

In this history of the Spirit, Jesus's poverty is sealed in the "Not Yet" of the incarnate Logos's history with his brothers and sisters. The poverty continues forth in space and time. The vertical incarnational dimension of the Logos's kenosis (the esse non subsistens!) is thereby affirmed in an ultimate way precisely "in Spirit."

Precisely *because* the superessential character of being, which makes it impossible to substantialize being by juxtaposing it to God, was revealed and in this way being was set free by grace, man's concrete nature receives an ultimate and unsurpassable affirmation. It does so insofar as the sharpness of being's transnihilation allows a reciprocal determination between the procession and the positing of the essence (natura) on the one hand, and, on the other, the concrete subsistere of being in, through, and with that essence! The rupturing of the hypostasis of being, the judgment and death to which God's incarnation condemns this hypostasis, and with it the entire essentiell constitution of Dasein that does "not yet" unveil being in its ultimate positivity (including the Greek essentialistic metaphysics and the Law of the Old Covenant), does not close the difference but rather sets it free as perfect and infinitely affirmed in the "promise of Jesus borne in hope" in the Holy Spirit.

This is where the profound sentence from Aquinas belongs, which casts a new light on what we have just elaborated: "Christ first repairs what regards *the person*, and afterwards *will simultaneously repair* [!] what pertains to *the nature in all men*."[27]

What exactly constitutes the difference between the redeemed person and human nature remains an open question, even though the natura qua essentia emerges from being in its movement into subsistence. The crisis of being is resolved, but—for the sake of the peoples to whom the Word of God is to be proclaimed—it still has to be carried out in the obedience of faith, which sets *nature* free. It is the history of the Holy Spirit, in relation to the *simul in omnibus reparabit*, that makes the as-yet-unclosed ontological difference intelligible.

The history of being—that is, the ontological difference that is to be undergone anew at every moment—and salvation history are therefore inseparably interwoven into one another. We now see what the logicizing of the "Spirit," which we have repeatedly encountered as the *Geschick* of modern metaphysics, actually means. It arises from the attempt to make nature and grace coincide, and thus to close the difference on the basis of a theological a priori. A falsely understood and exaggerated incarnation of the Logos gave rise to the triumph of being finally able to hold open the dimension of being as being, as a way of preserving God from being affected at all by the finite. But because being was not "undergone" in a properly speculative sense, it was impossible to avoid the temptation of a new substantializing of being that suspended it in a vacillation opposed to God. Reason therefore fell prey to the res; the "nothing" (non subsistens) was absolutized, and this banished thinking once again exclusively to the facticity of the quidditas rei materialis. In this way, "nihilism" was realized behind the scenes, even if it took some time to emerge onto the stage. As it did so, however, the theological a priori of the absolutized incarnation came to light as the cause that drove reason in the wake of being's transnihilation into the positive reality, which as the always already "persisting" unity of the principles apparently left the difference behind.[28]

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[27] *ST* 3.69.3.3.

But the Holy Spirit, who is the soul of the Ecclesia, makes inwardly present to us once again [*er-innert*] not only Jesus's incarnation, death, and resurrection, everything that he said to those who listened to him in faith—which is not to say that he binds us as logicized Spirit to the essence of the incarnation as an essentialized "thing-of-the-past" [*ein Ge-wesen der Inkarnation*]—but he also opens our hearts in faithful hope to the Lord's return. The Spirit of Jesus is the Lord of the salvation-historical difference. He makes manifest the most profound depths of the necessary sense of being that pervades the ontological difference, the sense that orders being, which the intellect has speculatively opened up into finitude.

At its most original roots, to think thus means: to apprehend being, but to do so along the incalculable *path* of human poverty amid the variety and multiplicity of beings. Only the one who thinks in obedience to being thinks in the proper sense, because he experiences being as a gift that doesn't cling to itself, which reason would substantialize and seize like "something to be grasped at."

The one who hoards the gift as a thing to be seized does not *thank*; that is, he does not bow down in gratitude to the origin in response to the gift, the origin to which the hypostasized being is no longer transparent. Thinking means thanking, because being cannot be degraded in the crisis into a self-enclosed thing and thus made into a despotic power opposed to God; but it is also not fixed and trapped in the substance that receives it. In both cases, thinking is negated as thanking. It is only in the properly enacted movement of being's finitization that thinking occurs as thanking. This thanking, however, is sustained by the exinanitio of the Logos, which ruptures the hypostasis of being, since he does not consider his "glory something to be *grasped at*,"[29] which he has to claim in opposition to the Father who clings to himself. This dialectic manifested itself to us as the logicizing of the Holy Spirit and as the substantializing of being. He becomes poor and takes on the form of the servant. He enacts the thanksgiving, which is the innermost center and the sustaining ground of all movement into subsistence, and that means every act of creation. He hands this thanksgiving down to us in his Spirit as εὐχαριστία, in which we possess the pledge of ontological obedience in faith until the Lord comes again.[30]

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[28] In a study that has not yet been published, "Der logisierte Geist," we have developed this more profoundly, above all in relation to the situation of contemporary thought.

Just as creation can be interpreted as being's movement of finitization and this can be undergone only in thanksgiving, insofar as reason empties itself of itself by virtue and in imitation of being's transnihilation and in this poverty is obedient to being, so too was that "assembly" secretly at work *ab initio* in the ontological difference, the most inward interiority of which is ontological gratitude. This "assembly" has its most profound act in just this event of gratitude, the εὐχαριστία; it is indeed the Church of Jesus Christ. The present context does not allow us to reflect on the vast dimensions that open up at this point. But there would be a great deal to say.

2. The Resolution of the Crisis of Being "beyond" the Dimension of Participation

A. Being as "the First of Created Things" and the Positive Reality

We are following the pull of being as it unfolds in the "moments" of reality, ideality, and bonicity. Along the way, we experienced great temptations for thought as we attempted to enact the crisis of being and the movement of subsistence into the bonitas of the concrete entity, which is the ultimate decisiveness of that movement. There will be further great temptations to undergo.

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[29] Cf. St. Paul, Phil 2:6–10.

[30] It cannot be an accident that the one whose thinking was uniquely founded on the superessential dimension of being—namely, Thomas Aquinas—had such a great love for the celebration of the mystery of the Holy Eucharist.

But Thomas himself seems to call all the foregoing into question when he writes, "The first of created things is esse."[31] In another place, he writes, "Creation is the production of the very *substance of the thing*."[32] Doesn't this affirm that being is substantialized in the vacillation as the "prima rerum creatarum"? Indeed, creatio is supposed to be the *emanatio totius esse*, and even "the emanation of all esse from the universal being."[33] In this case, wouldn't the place in which this emanatio accumulated and pooled up, so to speak, be the "first of created *things*"? If we read further on in the text, however, we find the following statement: "In the proposition 'the first of created things is esse,' the word 'esse' does not refer to the subject of creation, but to the proper concept of the object of creation."[34]

With this, Aquinas introduces a clarification. In effect, he is saying that, to affirm being as the prima rerum creatarum is not to make it the subjectum creatum; instead, it is simply to ascribe to being the ratio objecti creationis. But even so, it remains the case that creatio aims at being as being. If one goes on to say, moreover, that creation is the *productio ipsius substantiae rei*,[35] then, if creation aims at esse, wouldn't it mean that we would have to lead being's movement into subsistence back into its crisis and negate the always already undergone transnihilation? Wouldn't the already established moment of the unity of being and essence—that is, the positive reality of being—slide into the dimension of its explicitness in ideality? Doesn't reason here avail itself of a "ruse" in order to spare itself the task of carrying out the movement of finitization … all the more so because "a created thing is called created because it is a being, not because it is 'this' being"?[36] Does the movement into subsistence aim only at "ens" simpliciter, or do we not have to say that it also aims at *hoc ens*, precisely if we take the positive establishment of reality seriously?

But if Thomas explains why a thing is said to be "created" insofar as it is ens and not hoc ens by offering the following reason: "cum creatio sit emanatio totius esse ab ente universali," then this could perhaps be interpreted as saying that the movement into subsistence is a diffusion of the absolute "past-ness" of the prima rerum creatarum, which already has everything behind it. The creatum is indeed not called concrete with reference to this or that ens, but rather a thing is said to be created simply insofar as it is an ens at all (!): "Now to produce esse absolutely, not as this being or as that being, belongs to the meaning of creation."[37]

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[31] *ST* 1.45.4.1.
[32] *ST* 1.45.6.3.
[33] *ST* 1.45.4.1.
[34] *ST* 1.45.4.1.
[35] *ST* 1.45.6.3.
[36] *ST* 1.45.4.1.

If we allow ourselves to ponder these questions, we fall into a distressing and apparently unresolvable dilemma. Nevertheless, the nonsubsistence of being implies exactly the *prima rerum creatarum*, if we understand it in a properly speculative way!

If being were not *prima rerum creatarum*, then this speculative a priori would imply the dissolution of the emanatio totius esse in an operatio transiens, conceived as a motus—that is, a movement—into the positively given reality of the finite entity, and God would be sacrificed to the finite. For this reason, Thomas says, "First esse is so to speak the principle of all others, since it includes in advance in itself all things"[38] and "esse itself includes in itself in advance all the things that follow from it."[39]

If the creatio were not "emanatio *totius esse* ab ente universali," then being would necessarily be participated in as "a part" of creation and thus destroyed in its simple and perfect integrity. God would hold something back for himself *over against* the participation; some dimension of being would have to reveal itself as preserved from participation. The crisis of being would be dissolved and its transnihilation neutralized.

We have to understand the positive establishment of the finite reality, however, precisely in relation to the transnihilation of the "whole of being as being," insofar as being does not join together with essence as a part, but is always already what it is together with the essence and what it can be on the basis of the movement of finitization: namely, an entity, a creature.[40] Thus we can grasp the positive reality of the finite being only on the basis of *ipsum esse*, which represents the propria ratio objecti creationis. If we were to leap over this moment, God would rescind as it were the "pure mediation" of being in the crisis and aim *immediately* at the positing of reality. But in this case, God would absolutely miss his target to the extent that the res is always already posited in reality precisely on the basis of the decision of being as being in its convertibility with the "nothing." The pure, unmediated breakthrough to the positive res, which annihilates the esse completum et simplex and exaggerates the non subsistens, however, implies nothing less than the elimination of creation simply. If being were not the prima rerum creatarum—and here *res* is not to be taken as res subsistens (!) (subjectum creatum)—then the crisis of being would be swallowed up in the posited essence and the superessentiality of being destroyed. *Because* this is the case, Thomas can say that creatio, insofar as it aims at being as being, is "*a production of the very substance (!) of the thing,*" or "to be created belongs to the subsistent thing"[41] and "to be made or created is said in the proper sense only of the subsistent thing."[42] In other words, the proper foundation of the movement into subsistence, as the decision of the circumincession of being and "nothing," is expressed and characterized in the statement that being is "the first of all created things." Otherwise, the ontological difference would be totally absorbed in the factical res, and the not yet of speculative reason would be "aged" in the "factual" state of beings, that is, made "a-thing-of-the-past."

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[37] *ST* 1.45.5.

[38] 1 *Sent.* 8.1.1.

[39] *ST* 1–2.2.5.2.

[40] The movement of creation thus always means being's movement of finitization, in which the esse habens ontologically exposits itself in a certain "relationship (*habitudo*) of the thing that has received esse from another as a result of the divine operation" (2 *Sent.* 1.1.2.4).

Thus the emanatio totius esse ab ente universali does not presuppose the pseudo-hypostasis of being. Quite to the contrary! The negation of negation (of the finite as a self-enclosed fixed quantity) is carried out in an absolute manner precisely in the emanatio totius esse from God, since "nothing" is presupposed prior to "being as a whole." "Therefore as the generation of a man is from the 'not-being' which is 'not-man,' so creation, which is the emanation of all being, is from the '*not-being' which is 'nothing.*'"[43] It is precisely the discovery of the superessentiality of to be, which cannot be fixed in an immediate relation to the posited, subsisting res, that transnihilates all of the otherness that would affect God—not only the form but also the matter, which enter into the essence as what determines it as essence. Because ancient metaphysics had not yet experienced the superessentiality of being in its corresponding depth, the otherness to God was "not yet" radically negated, the essences were "not yet" radically sublated in the mode of nonbeing in the divine intellect, and moreover the ultimate positivity of God the Father, who was affected by the Other to himself, was "not yet" revealed. The Greeks struggled in a most profound way with this Father.[44] Ipsum esse, however, *quod importat rationem objecti creationis*, ought not to be interpreted as a Son who is bound by the finite and thus one who reveals the Father in his impotence.

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[41] *De ver.* 27.3.9.
[42] *ST* 1.45.8.
[43] *ST* 1.45.1.

But Thomas goes on to say, "Properly speaking, to create is to cause or to produce the esse of things."[45] Even though being is the prima rerum creatarum, the production of being is thus directed to the res, that is, to the esse *rerum*. This requires some reflection! It is only on the basis of the self-surrender in the exinanitio that being is the "first effect, which is presupposed by every other effect,"[46] only thus is it the *communissimus effectus primus*.[47] Because this primus effectus, as prima rerum creatarum, nevertheless harbors in itself the ratio objecti creationis and is not subjectum creatum (pseudo-subsistence!), then we must also say that the movement of finitization, and thus the entire dimension of participation, belongs to it in an originary way, so that Thomas can say, "the first effect of God *in things*, however, is ipsum esse."[48]

The following sentences say the same thing (!): "Ipsum esse refers to the proper concept of the object of creation" and "creation is the production of the very *substance* of the thing." To be sure, in the speculative act, the *non subsistens* breaks through immediately to the movement of finitization; every participation of being, however, is always already superseded by the emanatio *totius* esse and thus sublated in God.

The manifestness of being's "total self-gift" once again unveils the bonitas divina, which is *not* a function of a divine ideality that would be affected by the finite, an ideality that would thus have to achieve the negation of the finite and first be awakened to love. The exinanitio of being is not the act of divine self-affirmation *against* and *through* what is other to itself! Precisely this is what being reveals as "first" ... *praehabens in se omnia*.[49]

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[44] One ought to compare on this point "Elucidation of the Origins of the Convertibility of Being and 'Nothing' and the Greek Situation of Thought" (in Part A, chap. III.2, this volume) and especially "The Theological A Priori in the Pseudo-Speculative Unfolding of Difference in God" (Part A, chap. IV.5, this volume).

[45] *ST* 1.45.6.

[46] *De pot.* 3.4.

[47] *De pot.* 3.7.

[48] *Comp. theol.* 1.68.

[49] 1 *Sent.* 8.1.1.

To be sure, we encounter here the great danger of securing the omnipotentia divina *against* the finite "with the help" of this esse primum—as the final guarantee of God's free disposal over creation, which once again leads to a substantialization of being. The *esse quasi primum* then stands over against a self-enclosed res and has the task of using the power of its overwhelming fullness to break down the res's resistance in a second moment. But because the res itself proceeds from being, the *esse quasi primum* is depotentiated in itself in this speculative constellation, since it has to master an other that is not obedientially open to it and thus has not yet achieved itself as *actus actuum*.

B. Participation and Causality as Rooted in the Necessary Sense of Being

Now, Aquinas says, "'that whereby something is' is participated esse itself, because each individual is, insofar as it participates in esse itself."[50] Insofar as the finite entity participates in being itself, it is actual. But about being he says, "Ipsum esse is participated in by all things, but it itself does not participate in anything else."[51] "Ipsum esse is the ultimate act, which is able to be participated in by all things, but which itself participates in nothing."[52]

Thinking is already faced with a temptation here! Specifically, Thomas says: "a thing ... is made to receive a share of 'to be' itself from God."[53] God is "the most sufficient, the most noble, and the most perfect cause of all being; by God all things that are *have a share in esse*."[54] Thus finite entities participate in being and not, properly speaking, in God. But insofar as the creatio is the emanatio totius esse, this participated being is not speculatively juxtaposed to God, even if one were subsequently to cross out this hypostasis by virtue of the interchangeability of being and "nothing." Because of the truth that entities participate in the proper sense in being and not in God, it is precisely the question of God that appears to fall into a crisis and the temptation arises "in" ["*an*"] the ontological vacillation, to sink back, in the speculative foregrasp into the absolute cause, into pure finitude.

Thomas saw the danger that thinking encounters insofar as "to be," which is what entities participate in properly speaking, is affirmed as prima rerum creatarum. Thus, in *De ver.* 22.2.2, he poses the following objection: "The good that is desired by all things is 'to be.' But God is not the 'to be' of all things. Therefore, God is not the good that all things desire." In response, Thomas says, "Ipsum esse is the likeness of the divine goodness; and so to the extent that things desire to be, they desire the likeness of God, and so desire God implicitly." The *implicite*, of course, ought to be explicated in terms of being's "transnihilation." If the *Deum implicite* were forgotten and being were to remain in its pseudo-subsistence, then the finite would no longer point beyond itself but would intend itself in the desideratio and would liberate itself as absolutized finitude *against* God.

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[50] *Sp. cr.* 1.8.

[51] *In de Hebdom.* 2.

[52] *An.* 6.2.

[53] *De sub. sep.* 8.

[54] *Sup. Ev. Joan.* prologue.

Finite entities participate in ipsum esse. The full meaning of participation, however, is disclosed in the movement of subsistence. Thus Thomas says, "from the fact that a thing has being by participation, it follows that it is caused by another."[55] Participation thus provides the meaning of ens creatum on the basis of its causatum ab alio: "Creare est proprie causare vel producere esse rerum."[56]

Now we must ask why and how participation hangs together in an original way with being's "causal act." What is at issue here is the *internal* relationship between participation and causality.

When it is said that the finite entity "exists through participation," which implies that it is caused by another, then we must allow something original to be said about the essence of causality, with a view to the being itself in which entities participate. It is by being that the finite entity is what it is. But if the decision regarding being caused is made in participation, does this mean that being is originally a *causans*?

No, *esse absolute prae-intelligitur causae*.[57] This does not mean that being creates and causes, but that creation is a causing in the proper sense, a *producere esse rerum*.[58] Thomas therefore denies the inference that participation in being would mean at the same time "being caused by being," even though "ex hoc, quod aliquid est ens per participationem, sequitur quod sit causatum ab alio."[59]

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[55] *ST* 1.44.1.1.
[56] *ST* 1.45.6.
[57] *ST* 1.13.11.2.
[58] *ST* 1.45.6.
[59] *ST* 1.44.1.1.

If we wish to understand causality, are we thus forced to interpret being itself as the cause of causes [*der Grund der Gründe*]?

Now, we already see that the root of causality lies hidden in the dimension of participation, but that causality has depths of its own that open up. Things do indeed participate in being, and this participation comes to unfold itself as the movement of finitization in *esse habens*. Nevertheless, this unfolding does not have its origin in being itself, or else being would itself set the movement into subsistence in motion in the sense of causing it, and this would once again eliminate the non subsistens of being in the crisis, which negates the absolute, speculative "beginning" in being as being.

Participation thus unfolds itself in the movement into subsistence. But insofar as being's being caused by another opens up, a decision is made concerning the fact that, although strictly speaking "'to-be' itself" is participated in, nevertheless, for precisely this reason, it is participated in according to the emanation of its proceeding from God; being cannot be posited next to God without falling into absolute contradiction. The unfolding of causality thus shows that being and "nothing" exchange themselves for one another in an original sense, and for this reason being does not cause beings, but God does, even though "it is participated being by which the entity exists."[60] To the extent that the entity participates in ipsum esse, *it is*.

One can therefore say that the following two claims imply each other: "ex hoc quod aliquid est ens per participationem, sequitur quod sit causatum ab alio" and "esse absolute prae-intelligitur causae." It is only because being "prae-intelligitur causae" that the dimension of participation and, along with it, the causatum esse of ens *ab alio* by participation can be unfolded.

But we can penetrate more deeply into this!

We said that insofar as "being caused by another" opens up in the dimension of the participation in being, a decision is made concerning the fact that being doesn't cling to itself next to God as a hypostasis in love with itself, but rather that God reveals himself as the Creator, who produces the emanatio totius esse, the being of beings. *Esse importat proprium rationem objecti creationis.*[61] Creation aims at being. Being, however, "in" the crisis unfolds itself speculatively "through" its movement of finitization, which is once again set forth as the basic, determinative form of ontological participation.

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[60] *Sp. cr.* 1.8.

[61] *ST* 1.45.4.1.

Dicitur ens, quasi esse participans.[62] Creation does not aim at being as being in the crisis in order afterward to bring it to its fullness in the movement into subsistence. Being is not first held in suspension in order "afterward" to enter into the exinanitio. God would in this case have diminished being in order to affirm himself in his omnipotence by means of a prior depotentiating of being (which is, in reality, a depotentiating of himself as cause). God's absolute self-mediation, the identity of his self-enactment, is in this case sent off into the prima rerum creatarum as into a battlefield of divine self-affirmation, which is carried out by the *Arian Filius*. God then projects the finite as finite a priori as something that he needs to overcome. From the impotence of God, who has not yet achieved positivity through self-mediation, comes the hypostasis of being, and God's path *to power* would be at the same time the redemption of reason fixed in the vacillation of being as well as the absolute affirmation of the finite as a finite being sublated in God.

Being does not unveil its bonitas by freezing up the crisis of ideality—that is, by generating the contradiction of a subsisting prima res creata—but rather by accepting and undergoing its movement of finitization into the concretely subsisting entity.

Here, a difference comes to light between ideality and bonicity in the causal act of the gift of being. This difference corresponds in God to the difference between divine ideality (intellectus) and bonitas divina (voluntas). "God knows necessarily whatever he knows, but he does not will necessarily whatever he wills."[63] If God's intellectus and voluntas were to collapse into one another, then the essences sublated in the divine intellect in the mode of nonbeing would have to emerge as initially posited res (essences!), through the ascendancy of the voluntas, which "is directed to things according to how they *exist* (!) in themselves." Only a still more radically revolutionized will would be able to rid the space of ideality of these *obsessiones*, by positing these incipient entities in reality.

Thus if Thomas denies that the bonum, to which the voluntas divina is ordered, is the *principale nomen Dei simpliciter*, it is precisely in order to preserve being's superessentiality! To be sure, being as similitudo divinae bonitatis becomes finite in the dimension of participation, but it is not the cause of entities (Deus causans). If being were the cause of entities, then the bonitas divina—that is, the voluntas divina—would remain identical with the ideality of being (which means in this context with the intellectus divinus), and the mediation of being in the transnihilation would be dragged back into the vacillation and essentialized there as "a-thing-of-the-past." Thomas is therefore right to say: "This name 'good' is the principal name of God in so far as He is a cause, but not absolutely; for *esse considered absolutely comes before the idea of cause.*"[64] Just as, therefore, "being caused by another" brings out the meaning of participation in being and gives expression to the fact that being is not suspended next to God but is "nothing" next to him and so reveals God's "immediate potest," so too does it represent the seal of the fact that participation in being is founded on the truth that *esse prae-intelligitur causae*, which rules out the possibility that God achieves himself by creating the world.[65] The truth that it is being, and not God, in which things participate in the proper sense could, taken by itself, lead us to posit being next to God. The proposition God is Creator could lead us to interpret the emanatio of esse as creatio in the sense of a finitizing of God.

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[62] 2 *Sent.* 16.1.1.3.

[63] *ST* 1.19.3.6.

But in the twofold interpretation of participation and causality, it becomes clear that it is only because entities participate in the proper sense in being and not in God that God is the Creator—and, because God is the Creator, that therefore finite entities participate in the proper sense not in God but in being. Thus being is "pure mediation." Every unfolding of the participation in being that fails to enter into this necessity goes astray, even if being is affirmed in a formal sense as "pure mediation."

One can therefore say: Because being is participated in according to the emanation of its proceeding forth from God, it is "nothing." This "nothing" designates being not as a dimension separated off from God, but rather it unveils the inner dynamic and positivity of the gift of being, in which God really and truly hands being over to that which is. Therefore, because entities are to the extent that they participate in being, they exist in God, since being is "nothing" next to God. It is only when being is determined by speculative reason in its circumincession with the "nothing" in obedience to the necessary sense of being that we can interpret both statements—"ex hoc quod aliquid est ens per participationem sequitur quod sit causatum ab alio" and "esse absolute praeintelligitur causae"—in their unity.

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[64] *ST* 1.13.11.2.

[65] Therefore Thomas can also say, "But it does not belong to the First Agent, Who is agent only, to act for the acquisition of some end; He intends only to communicate His perfection, which is His goodness" (*ST* 1.44.4), and "In God, his esse and his quiddity are one and the same: for otherwise, his esse would be accidental to his quiddity and therefore something that he would possess as an acquisition from another rather than possessing his esse by his own nature" (1 *Sent.* 8.4.2 sc 2).

c. Participation and the Uncaused Character of Being as Being

The train of thought moves on! *Esse absolute praeintelligitur causae* means that entities, which are entities by virtue of being, do not receive from being only the character of being caused. If we were to interpret the *causatum ab alio* in terms of participation, then finite beings would not possess the character of being caused immediately as a result of their sharing in being, since they are in fact beings only to the extent that they participate in being. Because *esse praeintelligitur causae*, we cannot point to their participation in *esse* as the immediate reason for their *habitudo ad causam*! It is also the case, however, that, unless the ens disclosed itself as causatum ab alio, participation would be intrinsically impossible! For this reason, Thomas says, "Though the relation to its cause is not part of the definition of a thing caused, *still* it follows, as a consequence, on what belongs to its essence; because from the fact that a thing has being by participation, it follows that it is caused. *Hence such a being cannot be without being caused*, just as man cannot be without having the faculty of laughing. *But, since to be caused does not enter into the essence of being as such, therefore is it possible for us to find a being uncaused*."[66]

Being itself *non importat habitudinem causae*; that is, it does not introduce a relation to cause. The *emanatio totius esse* ought not to be interpreted in the sense that God released being from himself as a hypostasized ideality standing next to him, so that the absolute Giver would have in this case kept the gift for himself. But if being as being were to be absolutely subsumed under the category of being caused, then the crisis of ideality would not be opened up and determined precisely in its difference from the posited entity. In this case, all being would be caused, and God would therefore be subsumed into finitude. This sort of emanatio and production of being would inevitably have to be inscribed in being as being insofar as the "whole of being" is posited outside of God. Being as being would necessarily possess the trait of being caused as its inherent character. But because in this case being would subsist in the vacillation, then, insofar as there is nothing external to it as being, every subsistent being would have to include being caused as one of its inherent traits, and this would hold for infinite being as much as finite being.

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[66] *ST* I.44.1.1.

Here we encounter the old temptation that arises the moment reason rejects its obedience to being.

The being that is substantialized over against God, the being that rejects the exinanitio, draws God into being caused; by contrast, it is precisely the exinanitio and being's task in the self-finitization that makes evident why we cannot fully circumscribe being within the character of being caused. The reason that "shields" being in ideality from its transnihilation hands it (and God along with it) over to the radical character of being caused. Conversely, the reason that is obedient to the sense of being in the enactment of the exinanitio unveils precisely being's character of being uncaused (as being), insofar as the transnihilation of being itself through to the res is the revelation of the absolute positivity of the uncaused *ipsum esse subsistens*.

Thomas therefore says, "To be caused does not belong to the meaning of being simpliciter," even though "creation is the emanation *of the whole of esse from the universal ens*."[67]

Being therefore has the intrinsic character of being uncaused. This character of being uncaused, however, is unveiled as the condition of possibility of creation and participation in being in general. The character of being uncaused that belongs to being qua being opens up the metaphysical possibility of being's being caused by another in its most original depths: "*Now, to be caused by another does not appertain to a being inasmuch as it is being; otherwise, every being would be caused by another*."[68]

Every interpretation of ontological participation that does not plant its roots speculatively in these depths falls into the ambiguity of the pseudo-subsistence of being and thereby enfeebles being into a potency capable of determination.

Being is therefore also not posited in the "definition of the creature": "Ens is not included in the definition of a creature because it is neither a genus nor a difference. So it is participated in *as something not belonging to the thing's essence*."[69] If being were to enter into the creature's definition, if it were to be determined on the basis of the essence, then the finite would have effected a "divine usurpation" precisely as finite, and at the same time being would become trapped in the character of being caused in an absolute and abyssal sense.

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[67] *ST* 1.45.4.1.
[68] *SCG* 2.52.
[69] *Quodl.* 2.2.1.

Therefore every creature, by virtue of being, transcends into God's absolute uncreatedness; indeed, every created thing bears this indelible seal in itself and therefore turns into a snare for "fools"—this is why man so often elevates the creature into the "golden calf," around which he dances.

The character of being uncaused, on the basis of which alone participation can be speculatively unfolded insofar as all being caused is always already sublated in the uncaused character of being as being, provides the foundation for the following claim: "The creature is like God as regards general conditions, but not as to the mode of participation."[70] Because being as being has the intrinsic character of being uncaused, God is not an "impotent Father," who first has to seek his necessity through the decision of the crisis of being in the movement of finitization as the "helpless Father." He does not fall under the *causatum esse ab alio*, so that he would acquire something by means of creation. If he were in fact to acquire something from the fact that he gives, then not everything would result from God and being out of the absolute freedom of the bonitas divina. "Nor again does any good accrue to the creator from the production of the creature: wherefore his action is supremely liberal."[71] "Created goodness is not something more added to uncreated goodness."[72] Therefore, precisely because God does not aim at something other than himself but affirms himself in affirming the other to himself, creation is not something that creatures wrest from God, but is rather a gift of the infinite *liberalitas Dei*. "God, in that he wills and loves himself, wills and loves other things."[73]

God thus does not fall captive to pure finitude. This is the only reason that creation is decided upon and indeed in such a way that beings have their entire being from God and are "nothing" on their own.[74] They therefore necessarily, precisely "as created," have to bear in themselves the empowering legacy [*Ver-mächtnis*] of the uncaused character of being qua being—without themselves being God. For this reason, Thomas continues, "Hence although from the first good all goods derive, and all beings from the first being, yet all do not derive supreme goodness from the sovereign good, nor from the necessary being do all things proceed of necessity."[75]

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[70] *De pot.* 3.15.19.

[71] *De pot.* 7.10.

[72] *De malo* 5.1.4.

[73] *SG* 1.75.

[74] "Whatever thing exists apart from God has its existence from another. It therefore follows that, according to its nature, if it did not receive its being from God it would be a non being" (2 *Sent.* 1.1.5). "Hence if the emanation of the whole universal being from the first principle be considered, it is impossible that any being should be presupposed before this emanation" (*ST* 1.45.1).

For this reason, it is thus important to say that, no matter how it is interpreted, all participation *per compositionem*, insofar as it shares in the most originary of all compositions—namely, that of the coming together of being and essence, act and potency—is radically sublated in the *participatio per similitudinem*, insofar as this latter is grounded in being qua being, which possesses the character of being uncaused and always already has all composition behind it. It comes to expression in a particular way in the "always already persisting" positive reality of being. The more originally we experience the transnihilation of *esse* in the causal act of being, then, since the causal act intends the res subsistens, the more originally we become aware of the uncaused character of being qua being as the character of the always already given reality, as the "world," which is "always already there." This unique character of the being of the world having closure in itself, from which the hidden God has apparently withdrawn himself, the world that always presents itself to all of our questioning as a "world" that persists in self-sameness, the world that "engulfs" all the bridges to the infinite that we erect in an attempt to bring God closer to us—that is, to capture him as a piece of the world—it is this world, precisely in its tempting man to alienate himself from God because of its apparent absoluteness, that reveals the depths of the uncaused character of being qua being. This character is the ultimate seal of God's creative, loving intimacy. To reflect on this is especially important for us today![76]

D. The Exemplar Causality of Being

We saw that the character of being uncaused that belongs to being as being unveils itself on the basis of the fundamental form [*Grund-Gestalt*] of the good in being. This is true even though it could seem to be the case that the ratio boni would eliminate precisely being's uncaused character, insofar as being is referred back to the bonitas divina, of which being is a likeness. The bonum is indeed "principale nomen Dei *inquantum est causa*."[77] But the bonum is not *principale nomen Dei simpliciter*, "for being in its absolute sense is understood prior to all cause."[78] The bonum would be the principale nomen Dei simpliciter if it were to identify itself with being itself in the crisis. But the necessary sense of being, which proceeds from the ratio boni, is never identical with being in its ideality, or else God would be, as love, the absolute "Yes and No at once" and "*contradiction*" would be made into the absolute beginning of the unfolding of being.

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[75] *De pot.* 3.15.19.

[76] It is worth comparing to this a passage from Aquinas: "For every creature endeavors, by its activity, first of all to keep itself in perfect being, so far as this is possible. In such endeavor it tends, in its own way, to an imitation of the divine permanence. Secondly, every creature strives, by its activity, to communicate its own perfect being, in its own fashion, to another; and in this it tends toward an imitation of the divine causality." *Comp. theol.* 103.

[77] *ST* 1.13.11.2.

One can therefore say that the identification of the bonitas divina with the dimension of the explicitness of being as being in the divine intellect is overcome by the fact that being, insofar as it is being, does not have the character of being caused per se.

This deep-rooted character must therefore also come to expression in the unfolding of being's movement of finitization. This occurs, as we saw, in a paradigmatic way in the moment of the always already "finished," positively persisting reality of being. In this moment of reality, the principles of being and essence are always already joined together in unity, and being's movement of finitization is superseded. Herein the reality comes to expression, which unveils itself in a certain "ontological-persistence-in-the-state-in-which-it-happens-to-be" [*Seins-Zuständlichkeit*], which, as a "state," in a certain sense defers the question concerning the "why" and thereby makes evident the uncaused character of being as being, since the causal movement of being's movement of finitization has already reached its "destination" in it. This persisting staticity of the res is the great temptation of alienation from God, but at the same time it is the ultimate seal of God's creative power. Therefore: "If, then, [creatures] withdraw men from God, it is the fault of those who use them foolishly. Thus it is said (Wis 14:11): 'Creatures are turned into a snare to the feet of the unwise.' And the very fact that they can thus withdraw us from God proves that they came from Him, for they cannot lead the foolish away from God except by the allurements of some good that they have from Him."[79]

We thus see that the abyssal depths of the ratio boni come to light in the positive reality in which the uncaused character of being is unveiled, and that the bonum ought not to be made into the *principale nomen Dei simpliciter*. Being's exemplar causality also shows itself in these depths.

The necessary sense of being orders being into finitization. If the necessary sense of being lay entirely enclosed in advance in the crisis of being's ideality, then there would be no more finitization. Thus, because the bonum does not identify itself with the dimension of the ideality of being as being—in theological terms, because the Holy Spirit cannot be Logos-ized—then being as being does not have any causality by itself: "Being implies the habitude of a formal cause only, either inherent or exemplar; and its causality does not extend save to those things which are actual."[80] Exemplar causality unveils the truth that being can never be substantialized in juxtaposition to God and made into an actual agent [*zu einem Wirk-lichen*]. As "actual" in ideality, it would possess the uncaused character in itself and would fall captive to the res in the movement of finitization. Being's exemplar causality gets lost along this path. It is no longer seen that everything actual is identical to its cause in an exemplary way. It is precisely the pain of the exinanitio, the rupturing of the hypostasis of being in the obedience of finite reason to the necessary sense of being that reveals the archetypical [*urbildliche*] identity of the effect with its cause, which means, in this context, of the finite with God. This act is the creature's return to its origin, its homecoming.

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[78] *ST* 1.13.11.2.

[79] *ST* 1.65.1.3.

We can therefore say, regarding the exemplar causality of being, that being can never fall captive in an absolute way to its transnihilation, except when all causality is shifted in ideality into the ipsum esse, when the bonitas divina identifies itself with the crisis of being.

In this case, then, we have pure finitude, which must refuse the sublation in God that comes to expression in the uncaused character of being as being. By virtue of being's exemplar causality, by contrast, the finite is entirely itself, because, "in" God, it is God himself.

3. Being in the Unfolding of Ideality and Reality

A. The Procession and Positing of the Principles in the Dimension of Ideality and Reality: Toward the Hidden Unfolding of Modern Metaphysics

i. Essence "Juxtaposed" to Being

We have witnessed along the path we have traveled thus far the sort of temptations that arise when we attempt to determine the gradual unfolding of being out of ideality and reality into the moment of bonicity. The movement of thought can be enacted properly only in a steadfast obedience to the necessary sense of being. With this in mind, let us push on ahead!

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[80] *ST* 1.5.2.2.

Thomas says, "In the very fact of any creature possessing being, it represents the Divine being and Its goodness."[81] What this passage expresses is that the entity is a re-presentation, an illustrative making-present, not only of the divine being but also of its goodness: *et bonitatis eius*. We see here how being as being, which in a certain way possesses the intrinsic character of being uncaused, is open, in relation to the bonitas divina, to the abyss of the good, which is the *principale nomen Dei* to the extent that we call God "Creator."

Being in its uncaused character as being is entirely open and obedient to the necessary sense of being and, as positive reality, can never allow its uncaused character to close it to transnihilation, for, conversely, being's character of being uncaused is sealed in its transnihilation through to the finite res.

Therefore this being obedient to the exinanitio also has to hold with respect to reality. The positive reality is not an impenetrable particularity—that is, an always already persisting, finished "state of being," which can be broken open into the causal ground only through the *repraesentatio* of a ratio unleashed into the "will to power" and brought into the grip of the concept [*Be-griff*]—to such an extent that it does not at the same time reveal in its uncaused character that it is posited, or in other words that it manifests the causal act as being's movement into subsistence; in just the same way, being's being caused is determined ultimately on the basis of being's uncaused character.

Although the positive establishment of the finite reality results from the positing of the essence, the essence remains in this positing nevertheless preserved as "obedient space" with respect to the necessary sense of being. We thus see here how the unique way in which the principles came into play in the enactment of the movement of finitization is sustained in the unfolding of the moments of being.

But we saw previously that the finite entity is radically posited, because the posited reality is not a self-extension of being as being and because there is no "beginning" in being "as such" for the movement into subsistence. For this reason, the concrete, finite entity, prior to any movement into subsistence, is always already the persisting, posited unity of the principles, which are united in the moment of reality. We had determined the radicality of this positing on the basis of the posited unity of the essence *per seipsam*; the essence is "presupposed" with respect to being as the principle of transnihilation and of substantial unity with itself. It is through the essence that the *ipsum esse completum et simplex* is obedient to its necessary sense of being and successfully undergoes the crisis in its finitization.

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[81] *ST* 1.65.2.1.

But if all this proceeds from being, then in the same way, since nothing is external to being apart from nonbeing, the principle of its "transnihilation" must also proceed from being.

Because of this, thinking only too easily falls prey to the temptation to approach being as being speculatively in such a way that it overtakes its crisis "independently," so to speak, on its own resources, since, insofar as everything arises from it, being does not appear to be "dependent" on anything.

An objection arises along these lines: "All things made by God are called his creatures. Now creation terminates at being: for the first of created things is being.... Since then the quiddity of a thing is in addition to its being, it would seem that the quiddity of a thing *is not from God*."[82]

This means: Because everything proceeds from being as being, but the essence is posited "next" to being in a *unitas per seipsam, non per participationem*, the essence itself appears not to come from God. In the same moment in which the essence's procession from being is as it were abstracted out—or, in other words, the moment reason, in its "essentialistic" thinking, is no longer obedient to the transnihilation of being that is carried out in the necessary sense of being—being is mediated into its subsistence a priori in the ideal vacillation.

It is precisely the "wealth" of being as prima rerum creatarum and objectum creationis that posits the essence in its otherness next to being! The affirmation of the fullness of being, however, now negates this in the same speculative "breath."

As a matter of fact, in this negation, we cannot help but cling to being as *primum subjectum creationis* and determine it as "pseudo-fullness." But no matter how things appear, thinking is utterly incapable of contenting itself with this. For the moment that the essence, as the open space of obedience to being, falls outside of the movement of finitization, its procession from being can no longer be seen as "the same" as its positing. Now, if the essence is isolated in this way, then, because it is enclosed within itself, it repels being and is incited to harden itself in itself. Being as being no longer hands itself over, but rather the thinking that is no longer "essential" casts over being the veil of clinging to itself, which one can describe as "metaphysical projection." Subsequently, then, thinking has to "retrieve" ["*holen*"] the light of being; that is, it has to bring it out through its rational efforts.

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[82] *De pot.* 3.5.2.

Let us never forget that what is at stake in this transcendental dimension is always finite reason's self-enactment in the wake of being's movement of finitization, an event in which man makes a decision concerning his Dasein and being-in-the-world!

But let us enter more deeply into the matter!

Because the essence proceeds from being, since nothing can be external to it, in a certain sense what occurs in the essence's procession from being is a "primal division" ["*Ur-teilung*" = judgment of being]. However, because the essence is posited with respect to being, reason is preserved from the temptation to isolate being as being in the ideal vacillation, that is, to carry out its dividing judgment in abstraction from the positing of the essence and to win back for being the principle of its substantial unification with itself. The positing of the essence is the crisis of being's transnihilation. If we attended exclusively to the essence's procession from being and overlooked the positing of the essence, then we would fail to catch sight of being's transnihilation. Instead, being would split up into a part and a counterpart. Being would share a part of itself and would proclaim its pseudo-subsistence. What becomes evident in the positing of the essence as the space in which being achieves itself in subsistence is therefore the fact that being does not carry out the primal division, which occurs in the crisis or in its extension in the judgment, on its own strength but rather in the power of the necessary sense of being. This necessary sense has its seal in the dimension of bonicity, beyond the crisis in the ideality and reality of being.

But if we were to isolate not the essence's procession from being but the positing of the essence in unity through itself, and thus if we failed to see that being allows the essence to proceed from itself, then being would likewise be separated out from the essence and posited as a reality in itself.

Just as the absolutizing of the essence's procession from being frustrates the true primal division/judgment [*Ur-teilung*] of being in the sense of subsistence and posits the essence in "juxtaposition" to being, so too does the absolutizing of the positing of the essence prevent being from being able to send itself into the "judgment" of reason, in obedience to the necessary sense of being.[83] The self-enactment of finite spirit is thus rooted in a judging [*ur-teilenden*] conception of being. This judgment is the sentence that self-finitizing being pronounces over the hypostasis of being.

But if reason gives into the temptation that arises from the positing of the essence, then in the two cases described, the dimension of the ideality of being gets identified with bonitas. Being has made itself necessary, on its own, both in the vacillation and in the positive reality. There are then only two possibilities that remain: either being and, along with it, God are driven into pure finitude and thus everything is dissolved in an infinite causal process, which is provoked by the "sting" of the absolute contradiction, or being clings to itself in the pseudo-subsistence, wherein all of being's self-finitizing—that is, creation as such—is rendered impossible. These two consequences are in reality only two sides of the same metaphysical conception of being.

Because the essence has its unity "through itself" and not through participation, thinking faces the great temptation to posit the essence "next to" being and to split the speculative dynamic of the movement of finitization in the sense of being's transnihilation through a composition of the concrete substance into an *esse existentiae* and an *esse essentiae*. In this case, it makes no sense why and how the *actus actuum* could be *actus imperfectus* in the concrete subsistence, for being as *actus actuum* hardens itself in the pseudo-subsistence, and it is impossible to see any reason why and how the act ought to unify itself with the potency. Indeed, the positively subsisting finite res can no longer be speculatively mediated on the basis of being. Possibility and actuality fall apart from one another. There will be more to say about this later!

But if we isolate the essence in the positing, then one could ask, "If the essence is posited praeter esse, does it not follow that it is not from God?"

The train of thought, however, does not come to an end here. Being, in relation to which reason mediated everything in the vacillation, whereby it repulsed the receptive "essential space" from itself—that is, closed itself as perceptive reason to being's transnihilation—this being, which is transposed into absolute "omnipotence," now finds something "juxtaposed to it," to which it can have absolutely no relationship, since indeed it has already mediated all subsistence on its own resources. Now at one stroke the essence appears to be "juxtaposed to" being, which means "juxtaposed to" God, and moreover not even posited by him, since fundamentally everything has to be included in being itself. Being finds the "other" next to itself in an autonomy, as a negation to which it is subject.

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[83] Similarly, A. Marc, in *Dialectique de l'affirmation: Essai de métaphysique réflexive* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952), 136, says, "We may thus clarify what the idea of being is in this context: it is neither the essence in general, some vague thing, nor abstract and indeterminate existence, but the proportion of the essence to concrete existence; less a pure concept than a judgment; or better the fundamental rhythm of judgment."

The moment that being makes itself necessary in the crisis and closes itself in its obedience to the necessary sense of being, it falls out of the fullness of its simplicity, and God loses his omnipotence. Being is determined by the essence that has yet to be sublated and negated; that is, it is degraded into a potency and posited in an as-yet-unmediated fullness (an abstract identity) with itself. Being that clings to itself in the hypostasis of the ideal vacillation has thus proven itself to be impotent in the same moment in which it negated its obedience "through the essence" to the necessary sense of being. The intellectus capax entis is now no longer the "almighty," which as master over the source of being is able to allow the entities to be in their truth according to its will; no, it has sunk into a radical passivity with respect to the posited res. Its a priori perfection, its being awakened by the light of being, which has now been turned off, was made wholly subject to the affections of the res that is "not yet circumscribed" by the light of being. The hubris of hypostasized reason, which presumes to be the absolute control center with authority over all that exists, reveals itself as the absolute impotence of thinking![84] We see over and over again how profoundly determinative the necessary sense of being that lies in the bonum is for speculative thinking!

The conception of being we have just described, however, determines being at bottom as what has been handed over to its "other," the essence "juxtaposed" to being. Reason enacts its obedience to the necessary sense of being in a pseudo-form: it enslaves being to the essence, even though the hypostasis of being allows "everything" to arise from itself.

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[84] In order to keep within the boundaries of the present work, we must forego elucidating this act of reason as an actual historical event through an investigation of the actual formulations of individual thinkers.

ii. The Isolation of the Essence as Being's "Ideal Vacillation"

We thus see that the thinking that would follow being in its crisis in an abyssal way has to co-enact and undergo the openness to its transnihilation that being has by virtue of the essence. It is only on the basis of the necessary sense of being, which pervades the ontological difference, that the "relationship" between being and essence is able to unfold: as the "self-sameness" of the positing of the essence and its procession from being.

The procession from being is already the positing of the essence, to which being is granted: "God *simultaneously* gives esse and produces that which receives esse."[85] This endowment, however, does not occur in the sense that the essence receives the share of a quantity of being, swallows it up, and then in the next moment is once again "empty" to receive another "portion." To think in this way would be to fail to see what it is about the transnihilation of being that is not participated in as if it were a discrete quantity. Instead, in accordance with the emanation of its procession from God, being has thus always already appropriated itself from out of the transnihilation of the concrete substance and "preserves" itself in a posited unity with its essence. If the essence, therefore, immediately swallowed being up in order to open itself up again in the next moment for a new "allotment," then what gets destroyed in this affirmation is precisely the *positive reality* (!), in spite of the fact that this reality is precisely what this sort of thinking—namely, a primarily scientifically oriented thinking—has in view. In this case, the essence is posited "next" to being in its self-produced unity, the procession of the essence from being is eliminated, and the positing of the res is, by contrast, absolutized. Since the essence steadfastly preserves itself and persists ("perduring" as "that-which-*was*-to-be": τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι) in the positing, then, if this positing is isolated in itself, the actualization of the entity allows itself to be interpreted as the constructed composition of a lasting, "perduring" essence, with a quantity of being subsequently added to it.

But the granting of being is indeed the same as the positing of the essence, that is, the breakthrough of the positive reality. Only when being is seen in its convertibility with the "nothing" can we make sense of the "self-same" relation between procession and the positing of the essence. What comes to expression in this self-sameness is the fact that we managed to avoid identifying the necessary sense of being with the crisis of being in ideality.

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[85] *De pot.* 3.1.17.

To see being as *prima rerum creatarum* and not to hand it over "immediately" to transnihilation by leaping over the fullness of the completum et simplex nevertheless means to discover the stamp of the uncaused character of being as being. But because this stamp of being's uncaused character originarily unveils itself, as we saw, in the positive reality, this stamp is connected at bottom to the positing of the essence in its unity *per seipsam et non per participationem*. In sum, when we hypostasize being in ideality and thus falsely absolutize it and accord it the intrinsic character of being uncaused, it implies an essence posited next to being. Similarly, the essence posited next to being implies the absoluteness of the uncaused character of being as being, and so a hidden negation of creation in general.

This unfolding is rich with implications for the interpretation of what we call "reality." It shows us, once again, that the fixing of being in the "ideal vacillation," in which the pneumaticized reason (the identification of ideality and bonicity) lives, and the isolation of the essence in the *unitas per seipsam* (as isolated positing of reality) are one and the same. "Pure" idealism in this sense, despite the inevitable dynamizing of the absolute contradiction, is at bottom only the flipside or the perfection of a static essence metaphysics.[86]

The essence is "nothing" next to being, just as being is "nothing" next to God: the gift of being is the "positing of reality." For this reason, Thomas responds to the objection that prompted the line of thinking we traced out above in the following way: "From the very fact that being is ascribed to a quiddity, not only is the quiddity said to be but also to be created: since before it had being it was nothing, except perhaps in the intellect of the creator, where it is not a creature but the creating essence."[87]

To approach being in its ideality and to fix it there thus means to think of the essence as unrelated [*unbezogen*] "next" to being. The isolating of the essence, however, implies the isolating of the positing of reality. If the essence nevertheless "antequam esse habeat *nihil* nisi forte in intellectu creantis," then it is there as a *possibile* in the modus of nonbeing, because "in" God there is nothing other than God himself. Therefore Thomas says that the essence is not a creature in God but creatrix essentia, that is, God himself. But if this were to lie next to being and if being were isolated in the pseudo-subsistence, then the essence would lie in the divine intellect "next" to God (as the "other") in a possibile esse, which isolates itself more and more, separating itself from God until in the end it is no longer "of" God. In this respect, the essences that stand forth in the divine intellect accordingly provoke God to negate this negation, just as the ipsum esse has to negate the essence juxtaposed to it, so that the difference from the "side of the finite" and from the "side of the infinite" is interpreted as aspects of a single feature, namely, the yet-to-be-enacted self-mediation of being in its positivity and fullness.

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[86] L.-B. Geiger therefore rightly says in "Autour du principe de causalité," in *Bulletin Thomiste III* (Le Saulchoir: La Société Thomiste 1932), 388: "A too radical distinction between the static and dynamic orders rests in the final analysis on a too radical separation of essence and existence: being does not mean exclusively either essence or existence, but 'that which is.'"

[87] *De pot.* 3.5.2.

The dimension of ideality thus becomes explicit in God. An infinite wealth of released essences come forth gradually in the intellectu divino. But because in God there is nothing other than him that is not himself, these essences are necessarily God himself. And because God affirms his essence in an originary and absolute way, it follows that, to the extent that the essences proceed out of him, God must recover himself in these essences, he must run after the "other" insofar as these essences in God "are" in an originary way God himself in his dissociated ideality. Because they nevertheless remain at the same time "finite essences" (in absolute otherness to God), God must find his necessity in an absolute finitude. He thus becomes radically depotentiated. According to the extent to which nonbeing becomes "constitutive" in God—that is, the extent to which the essences come forward ever more explicitly in the divine intellect in their possibile esse in order finally to emerge as entities—God is intrinsically diminished into an abstract identity, he collapses into the act of negating the negation that becomes identical with him (!) by virtue of the contradiction that lies in the ideality: "essences as God himself—and yet essences in absolute otherness." What we have here is a depotentiating of God in the hypostasizing of being and on the basis of the self-enclosed essence similar to the depotentiating we witnessed in the relationship between being and essence. The essence's becoming explicit in the dimension of the ideality of God is the same as the pseudo-subsistence of being, and this in turn means nothing other than the absolutizing of the positing of the essence or the positive reality on the basis of being's transnihilation.

In historical terms, we ought to look at John Duns Scotus and Francisco Suarez in this context.[88]

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[88] Cf. on this point the author's *Inwiefern ist die Konstruktion*, especially chapters 1 and 2.

For Suarez, the *essentia realis* is the norm, which is grasped in the medium of the positively given reality on the basis of a transnihilation of being that is exaggerated for the res's sake. This essentia realis is "*ex se* (!) apt to be or to exist in reality," and thus it is logical to inquire into the *entitas* of this essentia, "for as long as it does not exist in actuality."[89] What is significant here is precisely the distinction of the entitas essentiae from its *actu existere*. Both the *ens* ut nomen and the *ens* ut participium are now presented on the basis of this essence; the former means something that has a *reale essence* that is free of any internal contradiction. The ens ut nomen is determined by virtue of the fact that it "pares away actual existence,"[90] it e-liminates the "real essence" in its freedom from contradiction, driving it out from the concrete actually existing res. *Ens ut participium*, by contrast, designates the *ens reale*, or in other words, the sort of thing that has a real essence *with* actual existence (which is not pared away) ... "et ita significat illud *magis contractum*" (!).[91] The state of existing aims at the *magis contractum*. Thus being is entirely determined on the basis of the essence, under whose "positing spell" ["*Setzungsbann*"] it has fallen.

But in Scotus, it is being's ideality that comes explicitly to light. The bond Averroes established between the pure spirits and the *physika* needs to be broken, the imprisonment of God or of *theologia divina*, in the res (physik) needs to be overcome through the liberation of the metaphysical dimension (ens qua ens). What this endeavor takes for granted as a speculative a priori, however, is an as-yet-unmediated res—that is, an exaggerated positing of the essence in itself—that then has to be sublated, and this implies the original emptying of being into potency. We have already spoken about this.

But insofar as the absolutized positing results from an exaggeration of being's experience of transnihilation (its non subsistens), the *esse completum et simplex*, the *univocatio entis*, has to come to the fore with speculative necessity. Scotus added to this not least a controversy with Henry of Ghent, criticizing the latter's mere *communitas nominis* in analogy,[92] which presupposes in turn a split between God and the finite being, making them two posited and self-enclosed res. It is this that called forth the radicalized unveiling of the *esse*

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[89] *Disp. metaph.* II. 4.6.

[90] Cf. *Disp. metaph.* II.4.8.

[91] *Disp. metaph.* II.4.8.

[92] On this point, cf. the good explications from T. Barth, OFM, "Zur univocatio entis bei Johannes Duns Scotus," *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 2 (1958): 95–108.

completum et simplex (*against* the transnihilation). In this way, the *esse completum et simplex* was set into relief through a speculative a priori against the res and its nonsubsistence ("nothing"), and contradiction was secretly introduced into metaphysical thinking. Contradiction was thereby elevated into an energizing element of reason in the development of modern metaphysics, even though this was not at all made evident in Scotus the theologian.

However, insofar as the speculative exaggeration of the *esse completum et simplex* in ideality, as we already attempted to show, does not in any way leave the positive reality behind, but to the contrary sets it in even sharper relief, there must be an ever more fundamental mobilization of the "metaphysics of spirit" to answer at every moment to the hidden, and incessant, absolutizing of the res.

The *esse completum et simplex* was gradually conceived as the horizon of the mediation of the finite to the infinite, in order to undermine the force of "pagan" philosophy's pretension. For the philosopher, according to Scotus, would say, "There is no knowledge of the supernatural that is necessary to man for existence in the present state, but all knowledge (as well as the "univocal" dimension of ens qua ens) necessary to him is able to be acquired through the action of natural causes."[93]

The theological a priori that lies hidden in this thinking is something we reflected on earlier. It has introduced a new hypostasizing of ipsum esse, which implies God's being affected by something that is other to himself, that is, the attachment of the Logos to a "not yet" negated otherness. In this case, the possibilia have to come forth with necessity, and what we have left is the self-enactment of the absolute as "negation of the negation"—that is, God's self-promotion as "spirit"—which is the moment the incipiently emergent metaphysics of spirit in German Idealism reaches its completion. To be sure, these consequences were not yet "visible" to the theological thinkers of late scholasticism. Revelation in a certain sense "preserved" these thinkers from the speculative disempowering of God the Father.[94]

In sum, these were the implications of absolutizing the positing of the essence. But Thomas says, "God at the same time gives being and produces that which receives being, so that it does not follow that his action requires something already in existence."[95] The substance, however, "is the proper recipient of being itself."[96] The positive reality is grasped here so radically that the giving of being calls forth [*heraufführt*] to the obedient space of the essence. Since this is determined as a positing, then the gift of being is at the same time the positive establishment of the finite reality. For precisely this reason (!), creation does not aim immediately at the subsisting res; rather, it reveals itself as the production of the "whole of being."

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[93] *Op. Ox. Prolog.* I.1.3.

[94] Cf. on this point "The Theological A Priori in the Pseudo-Speculative Unfolding of Difference in God," in Part A, chapter IV.5, this volume.

But in this moment the danger of essentializing, which resulted from the exaggeration of the positing of reality (as the collapse into positing), seems to turn into its opposite, namely, into the finite's being swallowed up in the jaws of the prima rerum creatarum. Both aberrations grow from the same root. They arise from the loss of being's superessentiality. We therefore repeat once again the sentence: Being is "nothing" next to God; the essence is "nothing" next to being. Thus, says Thomas, the creature "is likened to God in both."[97] Just as being *is* "nothing" in the crisis of ideality, so too is the essentiality not a creature in the divine intellect, but "nothing"; that is, it is God himself. One can therefore say that the "nothing" has its place in the divine ideality, and only thus is the decision made regarding the proper manner of the speculative enactment of the movement of finitization of being "through" the essence to subsistence. Because the matter stands thus, there is nothing secretly added as an "other" to creation, *whereby the creature would not imitate God. Because the "nothing" has its place in God's ideality, since the bonitas divina does not come to lie fixed in ideality*; that is, since the Holy Spirit cannot be logicized, being in ideality is nothing "other" than "pure mediation." Therefore the creature (!) has no unity with God, which would light up in the crisis of being of an absolutized ideality.

Because the essence is "nothing" next to being, insofar as being is "nothing" next to God, Thomas is able to say: "In the creature there is existence and substance or nature, and since it has both from God it is likened to God in both, because an agent produces its like."[98] The *similitudo divinae bonita-*

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[95] *De pot.* 3.1.17.

[96] *SCG* 2.55.

[97] *De pot.* 7.2.3: "The shifting of material potentiality (*inhaltlichen Potentialität*) into the divine sphere is hereby indicated in that, according to Thomas Aquinas, there is not some ideative world of ideas or values or essences (in the sense of a paradigm of actualizable 'whats') that 'stands over against' God." Przywara, *Analogia Entis. Metaphysics: Original Structure and Universal Rhythm* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 220–21.

[98] Przywara, *Analogia Entis*. By contrast, the following sentence runs quite counter to Aquinas: "Although creatures are not able to imitate God in those things that are specific to each creature, they

tis, however, is to be. It proceeds from the abyss of divine goodness, on the basis of which God is called "cause." Yet we can say that *Esse absolute praeintelligitur causae*. Therefore the positive reality as the posited unity of being and essence possesses the inherent character of being uncaused, in which all the creation of the finite lies, prior to the movement into subsistence, since the eternal peace of the Creator God is revealed in it: specifically, the peace of the unoriginate Father. But the essentia posited over against being; that is, the reality that is sealed up against the crisis of being and which has to be first mediated by the dynamizing of the contradiction, logically places the "contradiction" even in the Father. He becomes the Father who must chase after his Child, his Son, who helps the Father come to power in the *exinanitio* insofar as he thereby carries out the negation of the negation, or the negation of the essences as otherness in God—that is, the positing of the finite as "nothing" in the divine intellect—and thereby is meant to make manifest the positivity of being in its superessentiality. The exinanitio of the Logos is then nothing other than the sublation of the essence posited "next to being" or the overcoming of the dimension of the possibilia in intellectu divino.

B. The Reality of Being and the Participation in Being through "Similarity" and "Composition"

Being itself does not empty itself by itself; it is instead itself pure emptying. The *descensio* of the movement of finitization does not apply to being but rather to the finite entity. If esse were to "descend," then we would be positing an extension of being into the entity, which would in turn imply the complete elimination of any mediation of the finite to the infinite. But because esse, by virtue of the transnihilation, is always already the positively given finite entity, Thomas therefore says, "The creature, however, does not have esse except according to that which descends from the first being."[99]

If being were radicalized as *descendens*, then there would be only one possibility left to us, namely, that being would be assumed by a receptive subject that is *praeter esse*. In its descent, then, being would have to reject the independence of the "receptive subject" in order to manifest itself as actus actuum. It would at bottom be determined by the receptive subject and would

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are nevertheless able to imitate God in the most universal of all perfections, namely, esse." Sylvester of Ferrara, *Com. in II. contra Gentiles*, c. 6 n. IV. Here being's transnihilation is eliminated for the sake of the completum et simplex. The positive reality and the ideality of being are severed from one another.

[99] 1 *Sent.* prol. 1.2.2.

force God to have to use this descent as a means to attain his perfection, which implies that he requires this descent in order to reveal himself as the "ever greater God." Thus Aquinas says, "Whatever there is of perfection in the creature has been brought forth wholly and in an exemplary way from the perfection of the Creator, so that God possesses that perfection more perfectly than the way that it exists in the creature."[100] The archetypal procession of the creaturely perfection from God is possible only because being is "nothing." Therefore, in the *eductio* that Thomas describes, God does not bring forth according to his essence: "God is not the common being of all things."[101] "If, therefore, the divine being were the formal being of all things, all things would have to be absolutely one."[102] The *eductio* occurs "ita tamen, quod perfectionem illam Deus perfectius habet, quam in creatura sit," even though being itself is *perfectio omnium perfectionum*. The derivation of perfection from God is therefore possible only because being created does not belong in an absolute sense to being as being. Otherwise, the finite would not be able to participate in God's uncreated infinite perfection, and, because in this case all being would be created, God would have to perfect himself in the created entities. The creature's being is of course *deductum ab esse divino*, but "according to a certain deficient reception."[103]

When we interpret participation *per similitudinem*, we are only too easily led, from the origin, into the danger of dissolving the entity's descent in "decreasing conformity" to subsistent being itself in such a way that we take being itself as descending from God and so as liquefied in the entities. If we fall to this danger, it shows that we were led astray by the uncaused character of being and leapt over the exinanitio, which has its seal in the real difference of the principles (being and essence). Properly understood, "participation by similitude" therefore includes "participation by composition."

Participation by composition, however, runs the danger of causing us to overlook being's superessentiality and to essentialize the infinite act of "to be," which is composed together with a subject that receives it as a certain "quantity of being."[104] In reality, the unity of *participation per compositionem* and *participation per similitudinem* becomes evident in the speculative unfolding to the extent that the former has its ground in the *participation per similitudinem*, for the crisis of the *ipsum esse non subsistens* as God's first effect is the "beginning" of the speculative unfolding of participation simply: "'to be' itself belongs to all other things from the first agent by a certain participation";[105] being is the likeness of divine goodness.

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[100] 1 *Sent.* 42.2.1.
[101] *SCG* 1.26.
[102] *SCG* 1.26.
[103] *Div. nom.* 1.1.
[104] Cf. L.-B. Geiger, *La participation dans la philosophie de S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1953), 27*ff.* We believe that we are bringing the discussion concerning the participation of being, as it is being led above all by L.-B. Geiger and C. Fabro, closer to an answer.

In the entity's descent from its origin, however, which has its seal in the ever actual procession of the positive reality, the essence is never closed off from what supervenes upon it. It is through the posited essence that the deepest depths of being's superessentiality pronounced a clear "judgment" concerning the possibility of reason's hypostasizing of being. The "descent of being" is thus in a certain sense a *deficere of esse*, because being's being received, being limited, and being contracted "by" the essence is not eliminated in the transnihilation: "Even though every perfection that exists in creatures *descends* in an exemplary sense from God, proceeding from their principle in which they all pre-exist in simple unity, no creature is able to receive that perfection according to the mode in which it exists in God." This is something reason presumes only when it enacts being's self-mediation (as negation of the transnihilation) already in ideality. "Hence it is deficient with respect to the perfect representation of the exemplar according to the mode of the recipient."[106] This descent is therefore always also the composition of the really distinct principles, even though the composition has its roots in the reality, which "abides" ["*west*"] prior to every composition. "Accordingly, every thing which exists after the first being, because it is not its own existence, has an existence that is received in something, through which the existence is itself contracted" (in the act of composition!). "And thus in any created object the nature of the thing which participates in existence is one thing, and the participated existence itself is another. And because any thing participates in the first act through similitude insofar as it has existence (which circumscribes the movement into subsistence as the unfolding of being's being caused), *the participated existence must in each case be related to the nature participating in it, as act is related to potency*."[107]

The conformity to the "first act," which is not God, occurs "through" the concrete substance. But this has been unfolded on the basis of being's trans-nihilation. Therefore there is "nothing" that stands between the conformity to being and God. Therefore we can say, "Everything imperfect takes its origin from something perfect,"[108] and we can also say that the entity, insofar as it is interpreted in the movement into subsistence in the wake of being, does not "possess" being as if it were a "causal" source. The *trahit originem* shows that being is drawn in the direction of God. The "taking its origin" is therefore not a back-and-forth movement that passes between being and the entity in a difference that reason is able to "objectify" in reflection and to that extent comprehend!

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[105] *SCG* 2.52.
[106] 1 *Sent.* 22.1.2. sol.
[107] *Sp. cr.* 1.

Yet the conformity also resists dissolution in a mere ascent to the origin. The fact that the concrete substance is always already posited is what makes this conformity to the "first act" possible in the first place. But this does not happen in a dissolution of the subsisting res in the absolute medium of being as the mediating likeness of divine love. In its conformity to God, the creature in its nothingness therefore does not in any sense withdraw "before" the infinite ideality of the object of its "striving," in the sense that that which participates in the "Platonic" idea surrenders its own reality the closer it comes to the idea. Such a conformity would sublimate the res only in the *esse completum et simplex*, and the finite would disappear in the ideality of being's pure simplicity. But because the conformity to being has a necessary relation to its nonsubsistence, then, by the same token, the entity's affirmed return to an ever deeper independence lies hidden in this conformity.[109] The ever more intimate presence of God becomes manifest in the "distance" from the origin that characterizes the "nothing." In the impotent failure of our broken attempts to draw near to God and in the desolation of our being cast back upon the finite by the "poverty" of nonsubsisting being, we experience the bright darkness of God's intimacy. It becomes evident to us that it is not we who determine this proximity, but God alone.

c. Reality and the Ideality Mediated by Finite Reason

Once thinking has ventured out to such an extreme point, however, it is only too easy to shift back into the dimension of the reality that always already abides. The distress [*Not*] of speculative transcendence is apparently relieved by the entity, by which our thought knows it is always already embraced and "possessed," amid the impenetrable particularity of the things in the world. The entity's fundamental trait [*Grund-zug*] of being caused seems to disappear completely for such thinking. This persisting "state of being" ["*Seinszustand*"] that one experiences, which seems to go on forever horizontally, stifles any question about cause and sucks back into itself, as it were, the speculative opening of the sense-structure of causality (participation), insofar as it does not require thinking to enter into the vertical dimension of the ontological difference, but rather pushes it forward, ad infinitum, along the level of worldly data.

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[108] 1 *Sent.* prol. [The text was incorrectly given as *SCG* 1.44 in the original. –Trans.]

[109] "Those things which are from God are like him insofar as they are beings (*entia*)." *ST* 1.4.3.

Finite reason wins back several things for existing beings: the *eternity of duration*, on the basis of the persisting essence (the center of the positing of reality); the *unoriginated character*, insofar as the reality is no longer transparent to the crisis of being, which means that it has refused the radical scissure of the finitizing of being and thus neutralized the relation to the Creator; and *omnipotence*, insofar as the absolutized reality possesses in itself the uncaused character of being as being. The world acquires divine attributes, and everything seems to carry on without question.

But once this metaphysical course is set and the positive reality is absolutized in its givenness, finite reason subsequently acquires the ability to open up the being-caused character of beings' impenetrable particularity. Because the reality has rejected this being caused from the outset, however, finite reason now provides the "eternal" finite reality with the intimacy of the creative "presence of God" from its own resources. This occurs in the opening up of being as being. Being as being is necessarily posited over against the closed particularity and can be conceived only as an overpowering figure of the concept. But "empty being" would thus be imposed on the shrunken res and frozen in its unmediated character, if reason did not manage to set the fire of absolute contradiction to this fixity. This it can do only as "pneumatic reason," which has turned love into a function of its self-achievement. As voluntative reason, it can place "empty being" under the judgment of its nonsubsistence and thus force it to enter into subsistence, for love aims at the good *in* things! With this, the opening of the ontological difference occurs in the sense of "participation in being." The absolute contradiction becomes the "burning bush" of God's presence; it is the proximity of the absolute cause to the finite, a proximity determined by finite reason and reflectively measured by its closeness to the finite. In this fire of pneumatic reason, the closed particularity of the res opens up; for *this* "movement into subsistence" enters directly into its heart and ruptures the petrification of the abstract clinging-to-itself. In this way, reason has "let be" the reality that persists in itself by giving it the gift of being caused.

We thus see yet again that it is only on the basis of being's bonitas—which both puts to death the substantializing of the ipsum esse in ideality and prevents the positive reality from separating itself from the enactment of the movement of finitization (causare: dare esse: esse habens)—that the transcendental unfolding of being can be legitimately set in motion. If the bonum is no longer seen as the innermost heart of being, then finite reason must use the fire of contradiction to open this heart to the things that are. We have again encountered many dangers along this path, dangers that have tempted us to overcome the almost inevitable fixing of being in ideality by means of a "love" that has been "appointed as advocate" for reason against the understanding that settles and secures [*feststellenden Verstand*].

4. Reality, Ideality, and Bonicity

It is worth repeating that, through the individual operations and possible conceptions in which being's movement into subsistence is able to be an "event" ["*Ereignis*"], man, as embodied spirit, always undergoes the ontological difference in a specific way. But because, as we must still more explicitly show, man himself gives "direction" ["*Richte*"] to this difference, then as he carries out the difference, he has already made an a priori decision concerning his *Dasein* in advance of any concrete self-actualization in his being-in-the-world, -toward-God, and -toward- himself. Let us now allow the subject matter to pull us further along!

We saw that if the positive reality is separated from being's movement of finitization, then it can never be the terminus of creation, since being would in this case have surrendered its superessentiality. The temptation therefore arose to think that the positive reality has apparently "nothing" behind it and thus is itself posited as always already actual being at the absolute "beginning," which can be reduced back to "nothing." It is correct that the positive reality has "nothing" behind it, but this does not mean that it is wholly and completely absorbed into the uncaused character of being! This character, of course, comes to expression in an especially clear way in the reality that has always already been there, that is always already persisting. But the reality never leaves the "crisis of being," or its "ideality," behind itself in such a way that it could divest itself of it. Indeed, it is only by virtue of the convertibility of being and "nothing" that the positive reality possesses its entire positive weight. One could say that, because of being's nonsubsistence, ideality begins not in itself, but in reality. Reality *is the proper beginning of ideality*,[110] insofar as infinite actuality has no beginning in ideality "*in itself*."

Thomas therefore says, "'to be' is in the thing, and is the act of the existing thing, which *results from the principles of the thing*, just as 'to shine' is the act of the luminescent object."[111] "'To be' is in the thing": therein lies the danger that being will be circumscribed within the res, that is, within the essence. Being is not a *superadditum* to the essence, "but is constituted, as it were, through the principles of the essence."[112] Further on he writes, "It is not proper to say that esse is, but that something exists through esse"[113] and "in things composed of matter and form, neither the matter nor the form *nor even esse itself* can be termed that which is; ... the whole substance itself, however, is that which is. And esse itself is that by which the substance is called a being (*ens*)."[114]

Thomas has clearly seen the danger lurking here, for although he emphasizes in a decisive way the *in re*, he nevertheless adds, "et est actus entis, resultans ex principiis rei, sicut lucere est actus lecentis."

What he is thus indicating here is the fact that even though esse is in the thing and results from the principles of the essence, it nevertheless remains the entity's effective and actualizing act; it is on the basis of esse that an entity is called a being, and not on the basis of the essence, which is that whereby it is called a res. Nevertheless, by virtue of the positive reality that is given in the positing of the essence, it is said that "it is through its essence that each thing is an ens."[115] But because of being's superessentiality, the res, *as a positive givenness* [*als positive Setzung*], can never mediate its positivity to itself through the negation of being's ideality.... "Now it is impossible for a thing's existence to be caused by its essential constituent principles, for nothing can be the sufficient cause of its own existence."[116] For this reason, being in a certain sense is "added to" the essence, but it is so out of the superessentiality of its *transnihilation*, and therefore results precisely from the "principles of the essence."[117]

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[110] Cf. Ravaisson, *Essay sur la métaphysique d'Aristote*, vol. 1 (Paris: L'Imprimerie royale, 1837), 573: "The real is the beginning of the ideal."

[111] 3 *Sent.* 6.2.2.

[112] *Met.* 4.2.556 and 558.

[113] *Div. nom.* 8.1.

[114] *SCG* 2.54.

[115] *De ver.* 21.1.1.

The "beginning of being" in the crisis of its ideality results from this: It is the outcome insofar as being results from the positing of the essence (resultans ex principiis essentiae). But we would not be able to say that the explicitness of being in its ideality is now the *result of this result*, so that it would be reason that brings the being that results from the principles of the essence to a second result in ideality by means of the speculative foregrasp. The finite subject would first have to dissolve the reality into the ideality and being as being would have to let the "pure positivity" be. The substance would in this case be circumscribed within the res, and finite reason would be left with the task of mediating the substance into ideality as "concept." For this reason, Hegel, who brings the fate of modern metaphysics to its end, can say: "In my view, which can be justified only by the exposition of the system itself, everything turns on grasping and expressing the True, not only as *Substance*, but equally as *Subject*."[118] Here, being is trapped inside the immediacy of the res. The res is simply "given," and that's all there is! [*Es "gibt" die res einfach*!] Thus being becomes something "unmediated" for cognition. But the substance is necessarily "already *real essence*, or *essence* insofar as it is united with *being* and has entered into actuality" (positive reality). "The concept has substance for its immediate presupposition; what is *implicit* in substance is *manifested* in the concept."[119] The truth is the substance of the "concept," and it is so by virtue of reason's opening up of the substance (mediation), in which it takes the measure of the entire theme of the ontological difference that represents reason's constitutive act [*Lebensvollzug*] (movement into subsistence). This concept, however, as the unifying unity and the mediation of reality and ideality, is nothing other than the ontological moment of bonitas dissolved in reason; it is the logicized "spirit." The proposition "The beginning is a result" is therefore not to be understood in the sense that it is constructed entirely on the ground of the essence (reality). This would be the mistaken understanding that we just indicated above. We therefore said that thinking in the locus of all speculative unfolding begins in the crisis of being, in the "distress of the contradiction," because it cannot sustain itself in this dimension without presuming the hypostasis of being. Every beginning is *a "beginning" in the positive reality, precisely because to begin in reality means it does not simply end there.* The beginning in the positive reality is what unveils the beginning in the crisis of ideality. The relation between being and essence in the event [*Ereignis*] of being's movement into subsistence is profoundly determinative for the elastic unfolding of the concrete substance in its self-enactment [*Selbstvollzug*]. The necessary sense of being, as the determinative power of the real distinction between being and essence, preserves the entity as a positive givenness in the moment of reality precisely because it unveils it as the "beginning of ideality."

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[116] *ST* 1.3.4.

[117] Siger of Brabant failed to see this speculative dialectic of the *esse resultans*, which, because the essence proceeds from it, does not get submerged in being constituted by means of the essence's principles: "To say that esse is not the essence of the thing, but something constituted by the principles of the essence, is to affirm and deny one and the same thing: since what is constituted by the principles of the essence is nothing other than the very thing (*res*) constituted from them." *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, introductio qu. VII.

[118] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 9–10.

[119] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 577 [translation slightly modified].

It is therefore absolutely impossible that the "speculative beginning" be carried out by freedom, insofar as freedom allows thinking to abstract from everything in order that it may find itself in its simplicity in this absolute beginning. Therefore the beginning of thinking results from attention to the always already given things of the world as they blossom forth in appearance, because being results as actus entis. Nevertheless, this resultation, or bounding-back [*Resultation*], is nothing without the crisis of being in ideality, from which it draws its entire metaphysical weight as positing, prior to any speculative explication of reality. Thought's beginning in attention to the given is therefore the beginning of reason, which receives its beginning from its always already "having-been-with-being." The beginning of finite spirit's self-enactment thus stretches out in its intentionality into the kenotic attention to the beings that lie before it and back into the depths of the superessential "to be" in the crisis of its ideality. The embodied spirit itself, however, is the theme of the mediation of this "single beginning," which bifurcates itself into the "twofold beginning" in the speculative unfolding.

Being does not exist at all "for itself" in ideality in the sense of an originating self-mediation. Being *"is"* wholly and completely positive reality: "From the fact that the esse of a thing is not called an ens because of an esse distinct from itself it does not follow that the substance of the thing is not said to be by an esse which is distinct from it."[120] "But the whole substance itself is the very thing that is; and esse itself is that by which the substance is called a being (*ens*)."[121]

Let us reflect more deeply on what Kierkegaard tells us in this context. We will see that, in spite of everything, the hidden metaphysical locus of his thinking lies close to Hegel (!).[122]

If the contradiction, or, better, the "crisis of being," were not undergone, then reality and ideality would necessarily drift apart from each other; "existence," or *Dasein*, would in this case become something "enigmatic." "Existence," in this sense, remains the rooted irruption that constantly breaks through the "objective structure"—which means the established, persisting reality insofar as this is intended in its essentiell character. "Existence" therefore uproots our thinking from its false horizontal continuity within the dimension of reality. "Existence" in this sense keeps our thoughts "separate, one after the other."[123] "Existence," the exposition of the ontological moment of bonicity "as subject," unveils itself as the middle point between ideality and reality. Reality and ideality are simultaneously joined together and held apart in this point. Existence is therefore "the separator"[124] and "what keeps things apart,"[125] while at the same time being "what holds things together,"[126] the "medium,"[127] wherein reality and ideality "touch"[128] and enter into a "relation."[129] Yet how profoundly does Kierkegaard wrestle with being's super-essentiality in the speculative determination of the ontological moment of bonicity, that is, in the opening of the ontological difference as a dimension of "existence" in the mediation of reality and ideality in the spirit's concrete self-enactment! But being's movement of finitization through the essence is ultimately not carried out here in obedience to the necessary sense of being. What occurs is in every instance only a "momentary connection" between reality and ideality,[130] only a "collision,"[131] because of a failure to grasp the crisis of being in its transnihilation through the essence. Thus it remains unresolved as a crisis, and consciousness necessarily becomes "relation"[132] in the form of "the contradiction,"[133] which is ultimately not annulled by being's superessentiality. One can therefore say that, here, despite every effort, Kierkegaard does not overcome the essentialization of being, even though it is just this that he wishes to avoid. To be sure, he aims at the superessentiality of being; thus existence is for him "what provokes wonder,"[134] the "enigmatic,"[135] and we ought to retain the impression that this makes on us. It places man groundlessly in the Between and "holds him constantly in suspension."[136] But the "suspension" ["*Schwebe*"] does not yet reach the center of the necessary sense of being, namely, the bonum. We thus sense repeatedly how difficult the proper enactment of the transcendental unfolding into the bonum is!

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[120] *De ver.* 21.5.8.

[121] *SCG* 2.54.

[122] We are citing from the following: SV = Sören Kierkegaard, *Samlede Vaerker*, ed. A. B. Drachmann, I. L. Heiberg, and H. O. Lange (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag, 1901–6). In parentheses and page numbers, we present the Jenaer translation, Sören Kierkegaard, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. H. Gottsched and Christian Schrempf (Jena: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1902–22). Pap. = Sören Kierkegaard's *Papirer*, edited by P. A. Heiberg and V. Kuhr (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag, 1909–). For all of this, cf. the excellent introduction by Wolfgang Struwe, "Die neutzeitliche Philosophie als Metaphysik der Subjektivität," *Interpretationen zu Kierkegaard und Nietzsche*, in *Symposion: Jahrbuch für Philosophie* I (1949): 207–335. The citations are taken from this work; cf. pp. 231–32.

[123] SV VII, 287 [VII 30].

[124] SV VII, 284 [VII 28].

[125] SV VII, 159, 97 [VI 267, 202].

[126] XV VII, 259 [VII 2].

[127] SV VII, 301 [VII 45].

[128] *Pap.* IV B 1, S. 147.

[129] *Pap.* IV B 1, S. 147.

Being in the crisis of ideality is "itself" only in listening obedience to the necessary sense of being, that is, in its finitizing movement into the concrete substance. In superessential obedience, being preserves the crisis in ideality without collapsing into pseudo-subsistence, without leaping over the transnihilation, just as being in the necessary sense of being, as positive reality, is always already the "beginning" of ideality. Therefore being's movement into subsistence is sealed in the moment that is determined on the basis of the ontological moments of reality and ideality, but that is the decisively distinguished [*entscheidend-unterschiedene*] center, out of which the positing of reality as the beginning of ideality and ideality as revealed reality can be illuminated. Bonicity represents the moment in which being consolidates itself out of ideality and reality, without clinging to these two moments in themselves as "sublated" or as "needing to be sublated." In the bonum, being opens up its very heart.

Now, what becomes clear in the moment of being's bonicity is precisely the fact that the concrete entity can never make absolute perfection its aim *in*

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[130] SV VII, 268, 164.
[131] *Pap.* IV B 1, p. 149
[132] *Pap.* IV B 1, p. 19.
[133] *Pap.* IV B 1, p. 19.
[134] SV VII, 91 [VI 196*ff.*].
[135] SV V, 244*ff.*
[136] SV VII, 441 [VII 192].

actu; it therefore never achieves itself in an absolutely "single" step, in the sense that being would have included and actualized in its self-affirmation every possibility ascribed to it as finite being. Such an achievement would imply being's pseudo-subsistence, since being, in this actualization, would have gotten absolutely "beyond itself," it would have made itself "a thing of the past." The substance would have transposed the enactment of its self-actualization absolutely into the past, since operation follows upon being. The self-exhibition of the substance would be nothing more than the essence "posited outwardly"; the "appearance," the entity's "manifestation," would be nothing but an outward, linear extension of the essence that can be conceptualized univocally with reference to that essence. The finite substance would not be "in via." It would cling to itself in a manner that corresponds to the elimination of the not yet of the ontological difference that occurs when being is absorbed into the res. Everything "to come" becomes "a thing of the past"! But the self-affirmation of the act of being in the concrete, finite substance also does not occur in a ceaseless restarting of the movement into subsistence, as if this movement were at the same time a constant *giving* and a constant *withdrawal* of being. In this case, we would have overlooked the positively persisting reality, the moment in which the substance "always already" abides [*west*] in actuality and *perdures*, prior to any movement into subsistence. Being's self-achievement in finite subsistence can thus give proof that it is a valid enactment of the crisis of being only insofar as the finite substance pours itself out into the accidents and affirms itself in and with them or "beyond itself."

The necessity of the accidents' procession from the heart of the finite substance—that is, the bonum—thus results from the moment in which the speculative enactment of being's movement of finitization terminates in this heart. The externalization into the accidents is unveiled through being's gathering itself together "out" of reality (res) and ideality (manifestness, verum) and into the concrete subsistere. But because neither the reality nor the ideality can turn this consolidation into "a thing of the past," in the sense that being would have its mediation absolutely behind it, the dimension of the concrete substance's accidents now therefore comes forth, precisely as what legitimizes the overcoming of the "essential past" in reality and ideality. This dimension is the concrete exposition of being's self-mediation (in the movement into subsistence "through" the ontological difference). The procession of the accidents is the concrete resultation of being's self-mediation, a mediation that first became apparent in the vertical dimension of the movement of finitization. The substance comes to be temporally [*zeitigt sich*] and affirms itself by externalizing and internalizing itself in, through, and with the accidents. The bonum makes evident in an exceptional way the fact that substance becomes *what* it always already was. But its "*essential past*" [*Gewesen*] irrupts into the superessential dimension of the *ad-vent*; being is not trapped in the essence, the essence is not set over against the "appearance" as a closed in se or "X." But the entity has its "*being present*" ["*Gegen-wart*"= "turning toward"] on the basis of both moments (past or has-been and future or coming-toward); it does not suffer a loss of itself [*enteigentlicht*], either by being closed up in itself as res or by being "driven forward" toward itself in the imprisonment of an absolutized "future" (a rejection of the always already abiding reality). The bonum breaks open this closure. By virtue of the bonum, the substance is open to the "other," whom or which it goes out to meet ["*entgegenwartend*"]; in other words, the substance is a self-giving, self-preserving reality able to be sought (appetibile-bonum). In the bonum itself, the moment of the entity's *being present* displays itself, which as bonum is a *diffusivum sui*. By contrast, the factical res can only be violated, because, by itself, it does not pour itself out—the hypostasized being as verum can only be "used" in the will to power.

The depth of Thomas's insight here becomes evident in the claim that the entity is *named good* only *secundum quid* with respect to its substantial act of being, but *absolutely* according to the actualizing activities that occur in the *dimension of the accidents*.[137] And indeed this is the case *not* despite, but precisely for the sake of, the utmost radicalizing of the subsistere of the concrete substance.[138] All of this will acquire its proper depths only in the discussion of ontological spatiotemporality that follows.

As we unfold the accidental dimension, we also see that the ontological moment of bonicity prevents possibility and actuality from being simply external to one another. Possibility and actuality would be external to one another, the term *actus imperfectus* would be impossible, if we were to posit the twofold "pastness of being," both in the "has-been" of ideality and in the "has-been" of reality. The unity of possibility and actuality comes to light, however, from the perspective of the necessary sense of being, so that what *becomes* actual is what always already *actually is*, without it being a matter of the mere repetition of a fixed entity or of all possibilities being always already actualized. The substance flows out, to be sure, into its accidents; that is, the accidents flow from the substance: "But this is true only if the substantial ground is not thereby conceived as a unity that affirms itself in the many acts, but rather as what is co-affirmed in them."[139] If the substantial ground were simply that which affirmed itself in the many acts of its self-actualization, then the act of being would be so bound to the positive reality that the self-affirmation would occur only in the sense of an externalization of its "interiority," but not in the sense of an internalization of what has been externalized. What comes to light by way of this internalization in externalization, which describes the realm of accidents as a mediating dimension, is precisely the co-affirmed, internalized center of the substance. This "outermost extremity" of the substance's externalization is worth risking precisely in order that the essence's bursting forth in the concrete subsistence of the act of being may come to expression and the appearance not lie like a shell surrounding an essential core.

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[137] *ST* 1.5.1.

[138] In theological terms, we see here how significant it is to conceive of grace, as the seal of God's salvation-historical loving presence (in the ontological sense of the word), also as an accident.

From this perspective, it is clear that finite beings do not prospect a "determinate" act of self-actualization in the "moments" of their existence, but instead receive the destination and the itinerary of their further development as something always already given in the positive establishment of the persisting reality, without being achieving itself in a single step within the a priori realm of the essence. A thinking that essentialized being and thus absolutized the always already positively established reality would necessarily get bogged down in the res, reject the openness that lies in the crisis of being, and thus negate the prospectus of the possible acts. Every self-actualization would thus become impossible. But if the crisis of being's ideality were not already sublated in the root of the positively persisting reality, then the substantial ground would be utterly unable to enter into the enactment of actualization and affirm itself in the accidents, since being itself would have dissolved this self-affirmation into the concrete substance by negating the self-mediation. The decisiveness of being would be neutralized and lost among the endless multiplicity of possibilities. The act of being would have nothing else "to look forward to" other than the potency, the nothingness of the "other," which it would have to repel from itself. The prospection of the finite substance's coming toward itself from its rootedness in the always already posited reality thus occurs with a view to the entity's further development as a "whole." This wholeness, however, does not mean that the essence is able to posit itself over against the concrete enactments "in each moment" in a univocal manner or to sustain itself as a permanent structure that is univocally closed in on itself. The whole is co-affirmed and mediated in the many acts. It is precisely in this mediation that the essence is taken seriously as concretely existing, so that its externalization in the non-necessity of the appearance "presents" the proof of its being sublated in the concrete subsistere of the superessential act of being!

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[139] B. Thum, "Ontologie der Zeit," *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Psychologie* 1 (1957): 27.

To be sure, there is just a single movement into subsistence in which being comes to itself in the infinite variety and multiplicity of beings. If this pull toward finite subsistence, however, is speculatively separated out into its "phases," if the entity enters into the *resolutio* back to the actus ultimus, then what is shown on the speculative return path energized by the necessary sense of being is the fact that *what comes about* in the teleological movement into subsistence, in being's convergence out of the moment of ideality and reality into bonicity, is the *kenosis of the finite substance in its accidents*. What comes to light here is the co-affirmation of the posited ground of the substance in the multiplicity of the acts in which the substance (not esse) comes toward itself. This does not mean, however, that the substance would be identified with the accidents. The contrary is the case. It is precisely the substance's self-expression in the dimension of the accidents that would indicate its self-affirmation in the negation of this externalization. The accidents would be an extension of the substance if the essence were *not* disclosed in the externalization of the accidents through the superessential act of being. We have already spoken about this.

In the heart of bonicity, the reality thus preserves its openness to the crisis of being (transnihilation!) and is nevertheless wholly reality, without being able to dissolve the secondary acts of its actualization into the single track of the duration of its persistence. On the basis of bonicity, however, being itself is also manifest in the crisis as non subsistens.

The heart of bonicity prevents us from misinterpreting the three moments of the concrete substance's self-enactment as three separate phases of the movement of finitization. Reality, ideality, and bonicity may not be tied back to the ontological difference in such a way that reality would come to be identified with the concrete substance and ideality with the crisis of being as being. Being as love would in this case be determined as the mediating dimension, that is, as the "Between" of the ontological difference of being from beings. Bonicity would become nothing more in this speculative enactment than the act of the mediation of ideality and reality *through finite reason*. A final temptation therefore confronts us at the end of this development of the movement into subsistence, namely, the temptation to remain inside the speculative field of interpretation and, at the "end" of the movement into subsistence, to transpose the substance's concrete act of self-enactment into the finite subject and to depotentiate the moment of bonicity into the absolute reflection of self-consciousness. The good would unveil itself as the eternal restlessness of the finite spirit (determined by its infinite striving for perfection), in which being seeks to become itself in ideality and in reality by means of *Dasein* (man). At the end of this falsely unfolded movement of the finitization of being, we would be driven once again back into the hypostasis of being, in the "beginning" of the circumincession of being and "nothing," in which being always already negated its exinanitio. This negation as the absolute a priori ["*Vor-weg*"] then becomes what directs the movement, the perfection of the "absolute personality" that has awakened to itself and achieved its "exhibition" in the process of the mediation of ideality and reality, that is, of the substance as res.

We see that the very moment we think we have reached "the end" and have survived everything, we are beset once again by the temptation of the vacillation of being.

In being's enactment of the movement of finitization, there is no "end" in the sense that thinking so to speak would be able to "terminate" in bonicity. If thinking were to fix the midpoint of bonicity as the "end" and determine it as the destination of reflective mediation, then it would fall prey to the factical res and the logicizing of the good.

The "end," here, is therefore to be understood only as the ontological seal of the "now," of the "present." The bonum has always already opened the positive res into its ground, so that thinking is led precisely by the bonum into the poverty of the crisis of being. But this does not occur in such a way that the movement into subsistence would come to naught, and finite reason, forced back into the "beginning," would have to make its way once again from this beginning into the futility of the path. This futility has always already been negated by virtue of being's transnihilation through to the positive res, though, on the other hand, exaggerating the exinanitio would inevitably fix being in the res and condemn the self-actualization of this res in turn to the futility of a mere going through the motions of something that has essentially always already been (in persistence). The bonum cannot liberate thinking into the crisis of being in a way that would keep thinking from always already aiming at the positive reality in response to the pull of being itself. In other words, thinking cannot be kept from experiencing the metaphysical weight of the always already enacted positing of the res. In this sense, the good is end and beginning: as ontological "present." Rest in thinking's movement has its seal in the good, and so too does the historicity of Dasein and its always already achieved sublation in and liberation through the positivity of being. Only the "absolute system," which claims to gather up bonitas for itself, through an absolute reflection of the essentialized moments (mere reality and ideality), in the constitution of the ontological hypostasis, believes that it will no longer have to keep itself slavishly open "in the end" (which means in the "hodie").

The speculative interpretation of being's movement of finitization is therefore anything but the construction of an "absolute system" of being, even though the movement of thought in which we find ourselves takes the concerns of Hegel's logic seriously and attempts to penetrate its roots and retrieve whatever truth is there.

The terminus of being's creational movement thus does not culminate in the positive reality, but rather has its ground in the innermost heart of the bonum. If reality is isolated—that is, if it is made by itself into an absolute "terminus" of creation and thus posited as the end of the movement into subsistence—then reason would have no alternative but immediately to open reality up by its own strength, that is, to take the "ultimate" step, namely, the opening of the innermost heart of being's bonicity by means of the "subject's" self-achievement in absolute reflection.

But because the movement into subsistence is not realized only "on the side of the finite" but is necessarily determined on the basis of God's absolute self-enactment—insofar as being is never participated in as a substantial *thing* next to God—we are able to say "speculatively"—that is, in a "mirror and likeness"—that the transcendental unfolding of being out of the subsistence-movement into the moments of "reality, ideality, and bonicity," insofar as these stand in the "judgment" of the real distinction of the principles (being and essence), *can be experienced and understood not merely as a deficient expression of the originally complete being itself, but as a positive breakthrough and creative revelation of God's inner self-enactment.* To be sure, this does not allow us to appropriate "reality" immediately to the Father, "ideality" to the Son, and "bonicity" to the Holy Spirit. For "to create belongs to God according to His being, that is, His essence, which is *common to the three Persons.*"[140]

Here we face the great danger of projecting the completed subsistence movement into God and then attempting to unfold the Absolute speculatively by sublating the difference in God. Where this leads we have already seen.[141] In this speculative process, Father and Son turn into moments of the divine essence and remain abstractly posited "next to each other." But the divine nature, which is "not yet" sublated in the personally subsisting relations, hardens likewise into an abstract identity with itself and is mediated with itself only by negating the negation (essentiell univocity) through the enactment of being's movement of finitization, wherein God raises himself to the level of "Spirit" [*Gott absolviert sich als "Geist"*]. Both the differences "in God" and "in the finite" then collapse in "absolute knowledge" into the absolute "concept," the fundamental form of "absolute subjectivity."

But these great temptations ought not to discourage us from seeing that the *essentialia* (!) *attributa* in God—namely, potentia, scientia, and voluntas—"are included in the divine persons."[142] Insofar as the Persons appropriate the attributes, however, the processions of the Persons are also the "causes and types (*rationes*) of the productions of creatures."[143] Thomas can therefore say, "As the divine nature, although common to the three Persons, *still belongs to them in a kind of order*, inasmuch as the Son receives the divine nature from the Father, and the Holy Spirit from both: so also likewise the power of creation, while common to the three Persons, belongs to them in a kind of order."[144] This *ordo* comes to light for us in the enactment of being's movement of finitization. But just as, in the exinanitio of the Logos, the triune God's superabundant love became manifest to us precisely in the fact that finite reason's hypostasis of being contra deum was ruptured in the transnihilation, so too the Son's incarnation opened to thinking the abyss of the ontological difference in the unfolding of the concrete substance's self-enactment in reality, ideality, and bonicity, and in this metaphysical "explication" gave to man, as the plumb line [*Lot*] of being's self-exhibition, the task of appropriating himself so that man, as the focal point of being's movement of finitization, might learn to be himself. Therefore the glory of grace disclosed itself to us along the path of being through the *Father's preparation* of the receptive ground (the obedient, essentiell dimension of persisting *reality*), into which the *Son*, in obedience to the Father, speaks his Word and *calls*, just as the Father calls us in his *Word* as those prepared by him; in terms of the ontological difference, this means: being as God's supreme gift releases the essence from itself, hands itself over to the essence, even though the essence is posited and "*prepared*" for being, and mediates itself through the essence to concrete subsistence.

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[140] *ST* 1.45.6.

[141] Cf. "Theological A Priori in the Pseudo-Speculative Unfolding," in Part A, chapter IV.5, this volume.

[142] Cf. *ST* 1.45.6.

[143] *ST* 1.45.7.3.

[144] "To the Father is appropriated power which is chiefly shown in creation, and therefore it is attributed to Him to be the Creator. To the Son is appropriated wisdom, through which the intellectual agent acts; and therefore it is said: 'Through Whom all things were made.' And to the Holy Ghost is appropriated goodness" (*ST* 1.45.6.2).

This "movement," however, culminates in the bonum, which, as Thomas says, does not add any negation to the ens. In this interiority of being, the entity is united with itself, it is *resolved* [*entschieden*] in the ontological present [*Gegenwart*] and *distinguished* [*unterschieden*] from others there, as we will see in Part A, chapter VII, in this volume. Therefore the Holy Spirit *sets apart. He* separates the received Word of God out *from* its otherness, insofar as he "sublates" the otherness in the Word of God in the course of his history. The path of this "separation" as the self-unification of the man who has come to himself in the Word of God is the history of the Holy Spirit. The yes or no to Christ is sorted out in the ever more profound reception of God's Word through the Advocate that is the Holy Spirit, in whose love God calls, and has always already called, all men. The Word of God does not draw man's heart to himself by some "magic," just as being does not extend itself into beings, and just as every reception of being is always already superseded by the "prepared" dimension of the positively subsisting reality.

In man's being prepared by the *Father*, the incalculable nature of the positing of reality is unveiled in its ultimate depth, which precisely cannot be achieved or deduced through discussions about the truth or through a merely formal agreement with it. This is something that urgently needs to be kept in mind today, inasmuch as the unity of Christianity has entered into a new crisis! The "one Church" is and remains—"over against" the necessary dialogue with the truth that has been unveiled to us in her—a "factum" in the Holy Spirit.

Basil described this path of being prepared by the Father, being called by the Son, and being set apart by the Holy Spirit, in terms of the vocation of the Apostle Paul:[145]

> "Brother Paul, look: the God of our fathers *has prepared you*.
>
> And, lest it be thought that this was being said of Christ, he adds: So that you will carry out his will and know Jesus, the Righteous One himself.
>
> Paul, the servant of Christ, was called an Apostle … (Rom 1:1).
>
> He was set apart for the Gospel of God … (Rom 1:1).
>
> … the Holy Spirit said: 'Set Paul and Barnabas apart for me for the work to which I have called them….'
>
> If the Lord, the God of our fathers, chose him whom he had *prepared*, and indeed the Son *called* him, then it is the Spirit who *set him apart*, by the authority of his nature."

Powerful lines of reflection open up from this point for theology, though it also becomes apparent that the experience of being is always decisive in every case for the interpretation of revelation and the event of redemption, insofar as it is always already bound up in the rhythm of the event of redemption by the triune God.

The experience of God stands and falls with the proper enactment of being's superessentiality; otherwise, the Father remains trapped in the divine nature, the Logos is entangled in not-yet-negated otherness (finitude), and being is substantialized.

The superessentiality of being in relation to concrete subsistence has, so to speak, its a priori crisis in the "difference" of the superessential Person of the Father from the divine nature; only on this basis, the Persons—the Father and Son—avoid collapsing back into the absolute essence or turning into moments of the divine nature, which, univocally closed in on itself, first enacts the negation of the otherness that limits God through the "Spirit" and thus raises itself to the level of superessentiality. Maximus the Confessor hits on the truth with precision: τὴν ὁμοούσιον (!) τε καὶ ὑπερούσιον Τριάδα, ὡς ποιητικὴν αἰτίαν τῆς ἡμετέρας γενέσεως ("the consubstantial and superessential Trinity, which is the productive cause of our coming to be," *PG* 90, 884).

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[145] *PG* 29, 719, C.

The ultimate condition of possibility for the proper undergoing of the phases of being's movement of finitization, in which neither the positing of the essence is played off against the superessential being nor being as being is hypostasized against the essence, lies in the unfathomable unity and differentiation of Person and Nature in God that is experienced in faith. The thinking of being acquires its standing-on-its-own [*Selbst-stand*] and freedom on this basis. It was Maximus the Confessor, above all, who wrestled with the speculative assessment [*Durchmessen*] of the divine nature through the three "superessential" Persons[146] and clearly saw the temptation of the false συναίρεσις and διαίρεσις, coming together and coming apart, in the speculative interpretation of the divine life [*göttlichen Selbstvollzugs*].

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146. Cf. *PG* 91, 548.

VII

Ontological Spatiotemporality

1. Ontological Spatiotemporality and the Movement into Subsistence

Earlier we mentioned the temporal configuration of being's movement into subsistence as we attempted to determine being's self-finitization out of the crisis and into the concrete substance. We saw that the movement into subsistence is never in any sense a motus. In chapter VI, we attempted to determine speculatively the phases of the movement into subsistence in being's elastic self-exhibition in reality, ideality, and bonicity. This endeavor led immediately to a deepened understanding of the ontological character of time. Even though the speculative presentation stood within the pull of the identity of being and always already had the positive reality in view, it was nevertheless legitimate to lay out the steps of being's "coming to-itself" so long as thinking remained open in obedience to the necessary sense of being.

In the following train of thought, too, we must be sure to guard against surreptitiously introducing physical spatiotemporality—that is, the *motus* as *via in ens*, into the metaphysical dimension of being. Everything that was said above ought therefore to be taken for granted in the following reflection. What we are attempting to demonstrate here is how time proceeds from being, that is, from the enactment of being's movement of finitization. The aim is thus not to illuminate the ontological temporality of being, or even more radically to elaborate the "temporality of being" in the sense that we interpret being as caught in the "grip of time," but rather in the sense that we grasp time on the basis of being.[1]

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[1] Cf. on this point M. Müller, *Existenzphilosophie im geistigen Leben der Gegenwart* (Heidelberg: Kerle, 1958), 53: "This 'turn,' which does not describe being's entrance into time in order that we might access being through time, but instead describes the arising of time from being, so that everything that 'is in time' is meaningfully understood on the basis of being—this turn was supposed to form the content of the unpublished third section of the first part of [Heidegger's] *Being and Time*."

We saw that being, which finite reason thinks as being in its convertibility with the "nothing," is ordered into finitude. This finitude is not a "pregiven dimension" for being. It is rather the horizon of being's transnihilation "through" the essence, the existence of the subsisting self-affirmation of being in, through, and with the essence, which receives being, limits and constricts it. If we were to maintain this *essentiell* dimension of obedience to being in an "explicit" way, then we would be able to say that being exists "through it" or "in it" in the "arrival at itself" or the futural "coming toward" itself. But this never happens in such a way that this future could have its point of departure in the ideal vacillation of substantialized being or arise from it; for ipsum esse does not subsist: it *is* "nothing." Nevertheless, insofar as the difference of being from beings itself proceeds from being, since the difference is itself a being and is not able to be added to being from the outside, it follows that one may understand the future too in this sense as having arisen from being. Being, however, can come toward itself [*zu-kommen*] only as what it always already is in the positive reality. But insofar as the positive reality in a certain sense has being's transnihilation—that is, the crisis and the coming to itself that results from it—behind it, it is "set over against" [*entgegen-gesetzt*] the future of being. The positive reality unveils the moment of the always already posited unity of the principles: being and essence. "The essence is past—but timelessly past—being."[2] The reality thus reveals the participial abiding of the "essential having been" [*Ge-wesen*].

Now, we have determined reality on the basis of the res and this latter on the basis of the essence, insofar as the positing of the essence, to be sure, is the positing of something "pregiven and established" with respect to being; but in the pull of being's transnihilation, this positing manifests itself as the positively subsisting res always already in unity with being. If one were to say that being only comes toward itself as that which it always already is, then one can say without a doubt, in the speculative return into the relation of the principles, that being is in the future of its coming toward itself what it always already "has-been." But because being's persistence comes to expression in reality, the "essential-has-been" character of being [*das Ge-wesen des Seins*] can be determined even more sharply in a "participial" sense as "having-been" [*ge-wesend* = "persisting in the past"].

Just like the essence, this "ontological past" proceeds from being. The has-been springs from the coming-toward, insofar as being's coming-toward can exist only in, through, and with the has-been. At the same time, however, the essential past of the ad-vent is "given" ["*gesetzt*"], insofar as the future is in fact enacted only in such a way that it unveils itself as the superessential event [*Ereignis*] of the essential past, in which the has-been cannot undermine the coming-toward. If it did, being would collapse into the essence. Even though being "results from the principles of the essence," as we saw, the essence does not engulf it.

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[2] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 389.

Being's ad-vent and essential past are therefore not two dimensions that lie next to each other, just as being, absolutely transnihilated in the crisis, always already "abides" as positive reality. But if the coming-toward and the has-been were separated from each other, then the bonum would be destroyed, reduced back into the subject, and temporality would no longer arise from being but would be determined as the process of the subject's absolute reflection.

What the heart of the good unveiled to us, however, was the kenosis and sublation—that is, the self-affirmation of the substantial ground in, through, and with the accidents—in which the substance is co-affirmed, since being never comes to itself through the essence in a "single step." Thus what becomes evident in the bonum in an original sense is the mediating dimension of the externalization and interiorization of the concrete substance. As concrete substance, it has always already blossomed forth in its appearance, as finite being "there" amid beings. It shows itself as a self-sustaining reality, as appetibile.

One can therefore say that being is decided in the *Da-sein* on the basis of the ad-vent and the essential past that arise from being, insofar as Dasein *turns toward*, is present to, the other. This being present, however, is not a static, unfulfilled desire for the unity of the coming-toward and the has-been, but the middle between these, out of which being in concreto opens up and irrupts into the future and the past. In the ontological "now of the present," the past is open for the future of being, according to the concrete substance's receptivity to being circumscribed by the obedient space of the essence. The has-been therefore never brings the coming-toward behind it, and the coming-toward, as the future of the finite, can never close itself off from the has-been. In either case, being would condemn itself to the ontological (!) "timelessness" of the pseudo-hypostasis.

To be sure, the has-been always already does have the coming-toward behind itself by virtue of being's transnihilation. But it does not want to eliminate itself, which means it has been only in the openness "out" of the future of being and as ordered to that future, just as the ad-vent, subservient to the necessary sense of being in the transnihilation "through" its essential past, conforms itself to the has-been, without perishing in the absolute past. This reciprocal keeping apart as the most intimate bringing together, however, is grounded in the necessary sense of being; in the "Da-sein" of every entity, this sense builds the intimacy up and shelters it in its ontological present.

This unfolding of time out of being, however, would be intrinsically impossible if the essence did not receive being, if being had not opened in the essence the subservient *space* [*Raum*] of its act of obedience with respect to the necessary sense of being. Being affirms itself in the space of the essence; it is the always already established positive reality, just as at the same time it "generates/temporalizes" ["*zeitigt*"] the space of the essence through its superessentiality as the act of being in concrete subsistence. Insofar as being releases the essence from itself, it first in a certain sense "gives itself space" for its "enabling ground" [*Ermöglichungsgrund*], by communicating itself "lovingly" [*mögend*, "in an enabling way"] in the subsisting res. If the essence were to close itself up, if it were not the "space" of being's self-affirmation opened by the necessary sense of being, then the ad-vent of being would make itself into an absolute essentialized past in the pseudo-subsistence and negate the movement of finitization! But because the essence is the "place" in which and through which being bears witness to the exinanitio and to itself as likeness of divine goodness, because the essence is the "open space" in which being makes manifest its openness "with respect to" ["*gegenüber*"] the transnihilation, insofar as it releases this "space" from itself in order to come to itself through it "out" of the transnihilation, ontological "time" is possible. But one could just as well say that the enactment of ontological time on the basis of being is what generates/temporalizes [*zeitigt*] "space" and allows it to come forth from it, indeed, that the continuous "time-of-being" generates/temporalizes for itself its "space." The same can be said for the time of salvation, since grace arrives along the "path" of being.

Onto-logical temporality is able to be unfolded out of being only as "ontological spatiotemporality." Because "space" is given for self-affirming being, however, it is posited as really distinct from, and not identical to, time. The self-generating/temporalizing is always already superseded and "sublated" in the moment of the positing of reality. Thus the space of the essence is also in a certain sense always already one with time and blended into it in "enduring continuity."

2. A Consideration of Physical Temporality: Some of the Aberrations That Occur in the Unfolding of Time and Ontological Spatiotemporality

We believe that it is possible to unfold an ontology of physical spatiotemporality only out of this speculative root, insofar as one may say in this context as well: "Nihil potest addi ad esse quod sit extraneum ab ipso, cum ab eo nihil sit extraneum nisi non ens, quod non potest esse nec forma *nec materia*."[3] Physical spatiotemporality has its a priori measure in the foundational form of ontological spatiotemporality, which, we wish to stress again, does not in the least subject being to time or interpret the movement into subsistence as a motus. If this is how one were to understand it, one would have completely misunderstood what we have been saying. In fact, the precise opposite is the case! It is only on the basis of the speculative interpretation of ontological spatiotemporality that we are able to interpret all the aberrations in the speculation about time as metaphysical abridgements of the enactment of being's movement of finitization, and to grasp them at their original root. The transcendental deduction of matter from being thus necessarily implies that the specific conception of being is sustained in the illumination of the material data. We thus see how deeply we must begin our consideration of time in order to justify objectifying it in our contemplation. It stands and falls with the speculative penetration of participation. What comes to light here is the connection between creation and time, which possess their hidden connection in the single root of being's movement of finitization. With the interpretation of the dimension of the participation in being and with the great temptations that confront thinking therein, the unfolding of time is exposed to precisely the same dangers that we encountered as we followed being's movement into subsistence.

One of the dangers is that of mistaking time for duration, insofar as the positing of the essence, the has-been, in its character of "enduring continuation," falls outside of the generating/temporalizing of being [*Seinszeitigung*], and the ontological past is no longer speculatively sounded out on the basis of being's ad-vent. The positing of time as duration thus means nothing else than the sequestering of the essence in its being posited as a unity *per seipsum* over against the ontological temporalizing of being. The essence is no longer sublated into being's superessentiality. It therefore fragments in its duration into a series of merely momentary actualizations, since the persisting unity of duration is determined on the basis of the unity of the essence, while this latter is determined in turn on the basis of being's substantial self-unification. Thus, on the one hand, duration, in the flaring of actualizations, gets fragmented into distinct points, but these flares are fundamentally already superseded in the sustaining ground of the enduring essence; indeed, they are, as actualizations, already fundamentally neutralized and extinguished.[4] But if the essence irrupts out of being's superessentiality, then the act of being has to "sneak back" into pseudo-subsistence; it cannot avoid, as it were, constantly "running up against" the essence, which is closed off to the sense of being. Once it is posited next to the essence, the act of being nevertheless itself communicates everything that it is, which includes its subsistence. In this case, it is "actually" posited in juxtaposition to the essence, but it constantly sublates this presumed actuality in a "possibility" that is constantly "yet to be" with respect to the essence, since the formal structure of the a priori—which means that being is "not yet" itself in the crisis—is sustained even in the aberration. Thus being in the pseudo-subsistence is both possibility and subsisting actuality at the same time! What binds the two together, however, is the absolute contradiction. Because the hypostasis of being nevertheless implies at the same time the absolutized reality, the positing of time as duration thus unveils nothing other than the metaphysical isolation of the real. But since this ad-vent of being correlates to the dimension of ideality in which thinking has identified itself with being qua being, the beginning of the unfolding of time shifts entirely into the subject. But if being is suspended in the ideal vacillation, then it no longer transnihilates, which leads to a dissolution of the posited res. The univocal duration of the essence is not opened up into the concrete actualization of the enactment of being. Thus, since the actualization is no longer gathered up in the essence and incorporated into the persisting ground of reality, it occurs henceforward only in the sense of a series of discrete moments, which lie out beyond any essence that would "bind them together."

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[3] *De pot.* 7.2.9.

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[4] "The curious image of pulsing actualizations and de-actualizations, which, if it wishes to have the support of a general ontological law, has to presuppose an unintelligible tendency for actuality constantly to lapse into potency, ultimately stems once again from the unconscious association of being and duration." B. Thum, *Ontologie der Zeit*, 23.

The speculative constellation of the experience of being thus implies, on the one hand, the disintegration of persisting reality, its fragmentation into an infinity of momentary nows, or a dissociation into a "continuous now"; on the other hand, what is posited is univocal duration in the sense of a continuum. But if the speculative weight of the positing of the positive reality no longer comes to light, the act of being must either be wholly swallowed up in the essence and eliminated, or, insofar as the unity of being and essence in reality is dissolved, it must constantly irrupt in its concrete subsistence in a "being reborn" and a "dying away" [*"Neu-werden" und "Ent-werden"*]. If existence is absorbed in the essence, then it is de-"composed" (!) there, following the necessity of the positing of reality, and differentiated into a multiplicity of acts of being, which have absorbed their subject into themselves and separated out into an infinite series of momentary actualizations. Being in this case clings to itself a priori in the vacillation; it has not handed itself over to the essence and loses its proper being in the absolute fragmentation of a quantitatively determined infinite series.

But it is not our intention to follow out the unfolding of time any further in this context.

3. Ontological Spatiotemporality and the Concrete Substance

Let us take a brief look from this perspective at the relationship between substance and accidents. The movement into subsistence terminates in the substance, but not in a single one; for in this case, being would have mediated itself through a single essence and would be hypostasized in this case in ideality. But being doesn't pour itself out, in the exinanitio, into the many substances as wholly "one" in themselves, since this would negate the multiplicity of their appearance. This would likewise imply the loss of being's superessentiality, the dissolution of the good in reality or ideality. The essence, in its self-achieved unity, would be set over against being as a "closed circle," which being would have to link to subsistence from the outside. The essence would enclose being within itself and would be something that, because it adheres to being "from the outside," being has not yet negated. But the positing of the essence is nothing other than the procession of the essence out of being. In its reception by the essence, being therefore bursts open the positing of the essence and lifts it up into itself, all the while sustaining itself as positive reality, insofar as it mediates itself with itself "through" the essence. Thus being can never sublate the positing of the essence in such a way that it looks ahead to itself in this sublation in the pseudo-subsistence that has been fixed a priori. The looking ahead [*prospizieren*] of the substance's acts in its concrete self-enactment can never aim at being as such, since being is what it is always already on the basis of the transnihilation. Likewise, the looking ahead cannot be limited to the essential past. If it did, it would become in an absolute sense only what it always already is and would eliminate itself as looking ahead, since it would negate being's ad-vent. The looking ahead therefore occurs in the ontological Now of the bonum on the basis of the "distance" of the ontological future and past and at the same time always in relation to them. The moment of being present (bonum) allows us to understand that the substance always already and fundamentally anticipates the fullness of its self-unfolding as "a whole," because being is unified with itself in truth and decided in the moment of bonitas, and the substantial ground intends itself in this moment as being there [*als da-seiender*]: "The end follows upon the thing according to *the whole of its 'to be,'* and this constitutes the ratio boni."[5]

The substantial ground can nevertheless enact this anticipation of the fullness of its self-unfolding only in such a way that the ad-vent and the essential past come into play therein. But this means that the concrete ens can neither intend itself as "a whole" in the ontological vacillation, nor attain itself as "a whole" in the always already persisting duration of the positive reality. Subsisting being in finitude can therefore come to itself as self-mediating act only in the "multiplicity of acts." Being constitutes the substantial ground of these acts in the movement of finitization; it externalizes and internalizes itself out of its transnihilation into the fullness of accidents, and it is in this movement that it is the concrete substance's act of being.

Being's movement of finitization therefore terminates in the finite substance and gives proof of this termination precisely in the fact that the substance releases the accidents from itself and being opens up the ratio of the substance in relation to these accidents. Here we see that Thomas has good reason to say that "Esse significat aliquid completum et simplex, sed non subsistens."[6] The path to the substance, however, comes about for Aquinas in the following steps: It is not *non subsistens* but subsistence that is predicated of the substance; simplicitas, not subsistence, is predicated of the *ipsum esse*. But what discloses itself in being's path toward the subsisting substance, however, is precisely not the aim of a fixed substance that "has been," a substance closed in on itself, but "the subject of what is other than itself (subjectum alii)."[7] The mediating dimension of the accidents, in the procession and interiorization of which the concrete substance achieves itself, therefore corresponds to the ontological vertical dimension, which presents itself in the difference of being from the concrete subsistence.

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[5] *De ver.* 21.1.4.

4. Ontological Spatiotemporality and the Reception of Being

We saw earlier in the unfolding of ontological spatiotemporality that the illumination of being's self-generating/temporalizing [*Sichzeitigens*] in the movement of finitization remained entirely unintelligible without the "spatiality" of the essence. The essence receives being, just as being opens up this space of the essence. The essence is "cleared/spaced" ["*geräumt*"] on the basis of being. The deeper this "clearing" of the essence occurs—that is, the more thoroughly [*geräumter*] being releases from itself its enabling ground—the more deeply the reception of being can be carried out as being's self-affirmation in the concrete subsistence, but at the same time the more originally the essence too is posited in a unity with being in the positive reality. The more profoundly the reception of being is carried out, the "higher" the nature is; in other words, the more radically the received being is internalized and the more the substance's externalization, in which it always intends the fullness of its interiority, remains internal to it. Thus Thomas says: "Following a diversity of natures, one finds a diverse manner of emanation in things, and, the higher a nature is, the more intimate to the nature is that which flows from it."[8] It would be extremely fruitful to explore the different modes of the externalization of the entity according to the diversity of natures and indeed on the basis of the enactment of ontological spatiotemporality. We will return to this point shortly in Part B, chapter II.5.

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[6] *De pot.* 1.1.
[7] Cf. *De pot.* 1.1.
[8] *SCG* 4.11.

Yet we are already in a position to say: the higher a nature stands in the hierarchy of being, the "more closely" does its future and its past converge in the ontological "now" in the reception of being. To the extent that an essence has proceeded from being as "cleared," being too by virtue of its power to be [*Seinsmächtigkeit*] has to gather the "essential past" in its ad-vent in a radical way and therefore open itself as "being there" in an ever more original manner. But because the heights or depths of a nature in the hierarchy of being come to expression in this, one can thus say: the "higher" a nature is, the more immediately it stands in the "Now" of the ontological present.[9] Now, however, what comes to expression in the mediated free standing in the ontological present of being is the fact that the being of such a nature recollects [*einholt*] its essential past more originally in its future than being does "through" a lower nature. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the essential past and the ad-vent collapse into each other in an absolute "there," in an absolute present within the ever higher mediation in the hierarchy of being. Thinking would believe itself capable of positing this "there" if it mediated the reality and the ideality to bonicity in such a way that the bonicity were determined solely on the basis of the reflection of pneumatic reason fueled by contradiction. The aforementioned absolute "there" would be simply the ultimate peak of a logicized bonicity in the sense of an "immanent paradise," wherein God is "all in all." But the bonicity of being is never the unmediated (!) moment of a unity between the future and past. The bonum is not the linear connection between these two "ontological distances." To the contrary: the more originally this ontological present is grasped, the more radically the future and the past stand out [*heraustreten*] in relation to the "there." In the moment of being present, however, being arrives "there" from out of its distances.

At this point, thinking falls only too easily into the temptation of removing these ontological distances and collapsing either into the future or into the past. There is therefore a temptation in time, which results from the risk that finite spirit takes in undergoing the ontological difference. Precisely in the moment that it "separates out" ontological spatiotemporality, thinking runs the risk of forgetting that being in the crisis cannot allocate to itself any future, and that being is also never a thing of the past in the moment of positive reality without coming-toward-itself. But if being were to allocate the ontological ad-vent to itself in the crisis without opening this latter on the basis of what it always already is, then ontological spatiotemporality would be projected into God. God would thus unveil himself as the absolute "There," which forms the peak of the entity's extension of itself into being. The argument in this case would run thus: If there is no being present without the distances of the ad-vent and the has-been, then, as the ipsum esse subsistens in its absolute ontological present, God must have an absolute distance to himself in the future and the past. This speculative situation revealed itself to us, however, in the depotentiating of the Father into a hypostasis that is not yet capable of personality, a hypostasis that first has to recover its ontological distances through self-mediation—that is, the communication of the divine nature that has not yet been mediated—as "Spirit."

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[9] This will become evident at a more profound level when we unfold the materia prima out of being's movement of finitization: as a nonessential dimension, which makes the superessentiality of being manifest in an ultimate, unfathomable depth.

5. Ontological Spatiotemporality and the "Fullness of Time"

If the difference of being from subsistence is sublated in God's absolute identity, since difference is itself a being—or, in other words, if the identical self-enactment of God's life is an act of absolute difference—then the ontological spatiotemporality in God has to be sublated as well, without God thereby collapsing into space and time or coming to be in them. All of reason's pretensions to pseudo-subsistence, however, are put to death in the movement of finitization, in which the Logos becomes man in obedience to the will of the Father in the Holy Spirit. By this expropriation, the ontological hypostasis of the contra deum is annihilated.[10]

Now, we interpreted the enactment of the movement into subsistence according to the outlines of ontological spatiotemporality. Because the sublation of the ontological difference in God does not represent a rejection of the finite as finite as a sphere isolated in itself, but instead makes manifest the precise way in which the finite is absolutely mediated in God, ontological spatiotemporality is also sublated in God, insofar as it expresses being's finitization. The incarnation of the Logos is thus the "fullness of time" in that understanding of the word that intends the radical revelation of the superessential fullness of being and therefore the all-inclusive concept [*In-begriff*] of the ontological spatiotemporality that experiences its absolute "conclusion" in this fullness—admittedly, once again liberated into the not yet of the spatiotemporality of the ἔσχατον that holds sway in the Holy Spirit. The Logos, indeed, "comes" along "the same path of being" along which being is finitized. Just as, ultimately, the unity and distinctness of natural and supernatural revelation are speculatively illuminated in the crisis of being (supernatural in the sense of superessential: as the dimension of the potentia oboedientialis), so too do we see once again that "the time of salvation" and the "time of being" come together in one, precisely because they are distinguished from each other in their unity in the "path of being," insofar as being is always already concretely subsisting *natura* (!). It nevertheless is certain that there are not discrete times that stand next to each other or indeed follow after one another, because otherwise we would be positing an otherness in superessential being itself. Such an otherness, however, is always already ruled out by virtue of the fact that nothing is external to being other than nonbeing. Therefore the unfolding of ontological spatiotemporality out of being's transnihiliation is sublated by its movement of finitization into the "fullness of time." But ontological spatiotemporality never allows itself to converge in the absolute "There" of the "fullness of time"; that is, the "fullness of time" can never allow us to close the ontological difference in absolute reflection. The constant temptation man experiences to close the ontological difference stems from the substantializing of being. As we have already seen, this substantializing is what makes the "absolute concept" possible, by means of which finite reason leads the being that is given in the immediate in-seity of the substance into mediation and thereby presents itself as "mediated" (through the sublation of the true as substance). The "absolute concept" makes ontological spatiotemporality fundamentally transparent to reflection and so reduces it to an absolute essentialized past.

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[10] Along our path, we have already frequently transcended the train of thought into these depths. But a thoroughgoing theological unfolding of this dimension is something we nevertheless must forego in the present context.

Time is in this case *the concept* itself, which is simply immediately there. The not yet of mediation would be the condition of possibility for time in general, but the "complete" enactment of the movement of finitization fulfills time through the absolute reflection and eliminates it. Therefore, Hegel says, "*Time* is the *concept* itself, which *is there*, and presents itself to consciousness as empty intuition; for this reason, spirit necessarily appears in time, and it appears in time as long as it does not *grasp* its pure concept, i.e., as long as it does not eliminate time. It is the pure self as *externally* considered and *not grasped* by the self, or the concept simply as an object of one's gaze (*angeschaute*); insofar as the concept grasps itself, it sublates the temporal form, it conceives the beholding, and is conceptualizing and conceptualized beholding—Time thus appears as the fate and the necessity of spirit, which is not yet perfected in itself."[11] The "fullness of time" is concentrated here in the absolute concept by the bonum that mediates between reality (past) and ideality (future), a bonum that has been completely logicized by reason. This sublation of ontological spatiotemporality in the "fullness of time" stems from the "logicizing of the Spirit," which is not difficult to understand after all that has been said. The not yet of the ontological difference is brought "behind" thinking in the "incarnational pull" of the sublation of human nature (the focal point of the movement of finitization!) in the Person of the Logos. In relation to this "fullness of time," there is no history of the Holy Spirit, who is meant to liberate thinking into ontological spatiotemporality precisely from out of revelation. The logicizing of the bonum, being present, makes the history of the sublation of time in the "absolute concept" fundamentally a "thing-of-the-past." The only thing left for it, therefore, is to come to an end in "absolute knowing," in which the spirit subverts its destiny, which is not to come to completion. It can arrive at this end through the mediation of "pneumatic reason," whereby the immediacy of the in-itself, the form, "in which the substance exists in consciousness," is set in motion; the "empty intuition" is thus conceptualized, the in-itself is taken as "interiority" and the spirit, as it follows this movement, presents itself ever more deeply from the perspective of the fundamental form proper to it (the movement of finitization), in order finally to reveal the "absolute concept" in its perfection as itself ("fullness of time" as closed difference). The theologoumenon latent in all of this comes clearly to the fore. This theologoumenon is the dimension of the "superessential" being that is opened out of the "fullness of time" (incarnation of the Logos), out of which pneumatic reason attempts to mediate the fixum of the substance. A deep truth lies hidden in this passage from Hegel, the root of which we attempted to illuminate in the course of our reflection and to fructify in its hidden truth.[12]

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[11] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 558.

[12] In the second part of this work, we will attempt to interpret man as the focal point or the norma-

The logicizing of superessential being nevertheless keeps us from seeing that it is precisely the "fullness of time" that liberates superessential being for thinking in such a way that the time of being was radicalized in the utmost depth possible, without falling immediately from the "always already" dimension of being as being, thus disclosed, into mere pastness. It is indeed the superessential fullness of "to be" that makes manifest its transnihilation through to the positively subsisting *natura*, which reaches the "end of time" as being's fully reflected transnihilation only if grace gets identified with being as being and is likewise wholly incorporated into natura in the wake of the transnihilation.[13]

When we reflect on what finite reason perpetrates in the hypostasizing of being in its crisis—that is, in the ideal vacillation—then we can take stock of the implications this substantialization has for ontological spatiotemporality. Conversely, the "fullness of time" gets reinterpreted as the "end of time." This misinterpretation gets concretely expressed in the fact that finite reason attains to the unfolding of an ontological spatiotemporality out of the hypostasis of being, a spatiotemporality that therefore, insofar as it is sustained by the negation of being's exinanitio, comes to light as anti-time and anti-space. But just as the original enactment of the movement into subsistence was what first made possible the aberrations in the falling prey to the ambiguity of the ontological vacillation, then, since the formal structures of truth always stay in place, so too does the "fullness of time" make possible anti-space and anti-time, as the dimensions that produce hubristic reason out of the ontological vacillation's field of power. Anti-time and anti-space grow as the finite

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tive pattern [*die Richte*] of the movement of finitization. If one takes this, which will be articulated later, for granted at this point and holds in view what was already said about the sublation of difference in God, then it is possible to unfold a "theology of time" out of the speculative dimension that opens up with ontological spatiotemporality, a theology that Karl Rahner says is yet to be written (see "Current Problems in Christology," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 1, trans. Cornelius Ernst, OP (Baltimore: Helicon, 1961), 149*ff*.). To our mind, such a theology would be possible only if we understand the original dimension of being's movement of finitization out of the exinanitio of the Logos and explicate ontological spatiotemporality in this as the basic configuration of the movement of finitization. Our reflections may be taken as preparing the speculative instrumentarium for this task. Rahner's question "What do we mean by Time, History, the Evolution of Humanity, if the Christ is to be the fullness of this time?" (167) can be answered (in the second part of this work) once we have achieved an interpretation of the anthropological thematic of being's movement of finitization. From this perspective, a transcendental deduction of the plausibility of Christ also becomes evident, which provides an answer to the question, "why [is] man … capable of faith in the Christ of Christian Dogma"? (185). But when we say that an answering of "theological" questions can occur from out of the dimension opened up here, we of course do not mean to degrade the theology of revelation into a pseudo-metaphysics.

[13] Cf. "The Unfolding of Being in Light of Supernatural Revelation" in Part A, chapter VI.1.D, this volume.

spirit brings being's movement of finitization ever more profoundly to display as its theme in its self-enactment. The spirit's rising up into its sublation in the ever more intensive recapitulation of the ontological difference is precisely what makes possible the ever more radical negation of the sublation. But just as the aberrations are always already taken up into the original enactment of being's movement of finitization, so too has the "fullness of time" taken anti-time and anti-space up into itself. It therefore liberates its own negation in the history of the Holy Spirit, which progresses toward the return of the Lord, a negation that is recapitulated in the total negation of the anti-Christ in anti-space and anti-time at the "end," just as being's movement of finitization is recapitulated in the incarnate Word of God.

Just as being releases the essence and opens up for itself therein the obedient space of its transnihilation, just as being carries out its kenosis through the essence in the realm of speculative reason, so too is the "finite space of obedience" posited in relation to the Logos, out of his free availability in obedience to the Father. This finite space at the same time proceeds from the Logos in the same act of obedience, insofar as it culminates in the crucifixion. In this obedience of the Son of God, who does not cling to his glory as something to be grasped at, in this obedience unto death on a cross, the new space of the essence comes forth, the now definitive [*ent-gültige*] obedient space of the essence, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in which the necessary sense of being has its proper origin. Being is thereby brought, in the movement of finitization as the theme of the finite spirit, into an ultimate subservience, and man is elevated in an authoritative [*vollgültiger*] way to the status of the focal point of the movement of finitization. Thus the Ecclesia, as the Bride of Christ, comes forth in the Holy Spirit from the bloody baptism of the cross, from the transnihilating act of Christ's death. Just as the essence nevertheless is what it is only out of being's movement of finitization and the constant recollection of the same, so too is the Bride of the Word what she is only in the "unceasing" celebration of the memorial and the recollection of just this death, in which the time of being and the time of salvation are brought to perfection. Here, ontological spatiotemporality is always already revealed out of the "fullness of time" as the space and time of salvation, in which the "entire" time of creation (participation in being as the enactment of being's movement of finitization: as the act of creation!) is present.[14]

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[14] Cf. on this the conclusion of Part A, chapter VI.1.D, this volume.

VIII

Some of the Consequences That Arise When Finite Reason Falls Victim to Temptation

1. The Dissociation of Possibility and Actuality in the Indifferentiation of the Necessary Sense of Being

A. The "Ontological Monads" at the Origin of Ideality

We saw earlier that the moment being clings to itself in ideality, the essence too seals itself up in its unity over against being. If being as actus actuum rejects the essence and therefore potentiality, it can come into view only as an always already actualized reality, as an "actual thing" [*Wirkliches*] in the sense of pseudo-subsistence.

By necessary implication, in the wake of this essentialization, the substance cannot avoid sealing itself up in turn against its potency as a "realized core," and in this case the *actus secundi* would become the self-actualizations of their ground, their operations would lie like a ring around the already "actual" substantial core. Having thus been substantialized, the act of being is radically subsumed into the essence, and so any further actualization of the substance becomes something already over and done with. Thus the entity closes itself up into an ontological monad!

When being gets fixed in the vacillation, however, the necessary sense of being is also neutralized, the bonum is reduced back to ideality or reality (which is ultimately the same thing), and thus the substance loses the mediating dimension of the "not yet" (the bonitas of being) in favor of the "unity" of possibility and actuality.

The self-enclosed substance therefore depends entirely on what comes to it from the outside as an actualizing force for the realization of the ring of potentialities that encircle it. The external actualization, however, is at bottom entirely incapable of reaching the substance, since the core remains unaffected to the extent that it is always already actual. Because the thing that comes from the outside to bring about the actualization, however, is itself in turn simply a finite reality encircled by potentiality, this thing likewise is unable to have any effect, by itself, on the other substance. Instead, the finite thing drives reason immediately back to the causa prima, which, as infinite actuality, is in a position to dispose the finite substances toward one another and to bring about reciprocal causality through a pre-established harmony.

The speculative a priori makes these posited essences, as closed substantial cores, nothing other than divine ideality separated out into a store of possibilia. The positing of the essence next to being necessarily implies the emergence of essences in the divine intellect—or, in other words, the negation of God himself that needs to be negated—insofar as the essence posited next to being presents a negation to be negated of the being that has achieved itself through mediation. But if the essences have come forth from God, which presupposes (!) their having always already been sublated in the divine intellect, then, because God recognizes the essences in himself as his own essence, the essentia divina creatrix itself falls prey to dissociation. The essences' coming forth and being posited as concrete res by the voluntas divina thus presuppose the essences as anteriorly suspended in an infinite "ideal medium" in the mens universi, which is God himself. Because the essences are fundamentally closed as monads in ideality (in the medium of the divine substance [*Wesenheit*] recognized by God as God himself), then once they are really posited, they don't need "any windows," since each monad possesses the "whole" in itself.

The concrete res is therefore immediately extended into the absolute ideality, which in turn implies that the divine intellect, in which the essences are conceived, is immediately "dissolved" with respect to the divine will. The will is thus able to posit these essences as positive res *ad extra* and thus bring the crisis in the divine ideality to resolution. The divine intellect and divine will collapse into one another. The "difference" between them has already become so minuscule that the span of the intelligible possibles (conceived by the divine intellect) and the factically posited res (willed by the voluntas) converge in a "flash," in which the posited monad stands forth from God's ideality, but at the same time remains caught up in the ether of this ideality in "pre-established harmony."

We saw earlier that the beginning of modern metaphysics occurred with the attempt to free reason from the imprisonment of the *quidditas rei materialis* by means of the *ens indifferens* opened up in revelation. At issue here was the attempt to sound out the depths of that which is other to God on the basis of the omnipotentia divina, to carry out the negation of the negation, and to mediate the finite into the absolute. In Scotus's endeavor, the essences, which in creatio ex nihilo no longer affected being from the outside and thus were sublated in God, now become visible once again in the divine intellect. But, in contrast to the pre-Christian conception, these essences no longer affected God as something imposed on him—for the stubbornness of finitude has indeed been overcome—but present themselves as it were *in statu naturae purae*. Nevertheless, just as the ens indifferens was unveiled as the mediating link between physics and theology and thus as a negation of the finite that was bound up with God, so too the omnipotentia divina's wealth of possibility correspondingly came to light as a power unlimited and undetermined by any finite thing. This fullness of possibility comes to expression in the possibilia: "Logical possibility is a mode of composition formed by the intellect, the terms of which do not include contradiction."[1] And further on Scotus writes: "For that, and only that (!), is truly nothing which includes contradiction, since it excludes existence, not only outside the intellect, but inside the intellect as well."[2] For Scotus, therefore, it is impossible for the nihil to have its place in God's ideality: "precisely because it includes contradiction, then just as it is unable to exist outside the soul, so too is it unable to be something intelligible or any sort of being inside the soul."[3] As this text makes clear, this is how we ought to determine the absolute nothingness of the "nothing." But if the "nothing" ceases to have a place in God's intellect [*in der Idealität Gottes*] to the extent that it is characterized by internal contradiction, it must therefore somehow be repelled [*absetzen*] by God, for *God cannot create out of this nothing!*

What occurs with this speculative determination of the nothing is nevertheless at the same time the introduction of the possibilia into the divine intellect, which God is able to transpose into existence. These possibilia prevent God from remaining imprisoned eternally in himself, since the contradiction-laden nothing barricades itself against God. They moreover prevent God from emanating into creation, since a God that is trapped in himself would then have to break himself up into pieces. The dimension of the possibilia is thus unveiled as the condition of possibility of God's self-expropriation in the absolute preservation of his omnipotence.

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[1] Scotus, *Op. Ox.* I.2.6.2.10.

[2] *Quodl.* 3.n.2.

[3] *Quodl.* 3.n.2.

In this critical dimension—essences as God's essence (God as absolute origin!) and at the same time not (!) God's essence (God remains himself in the act of creation)—which, as we have already seen, posits the absolute contradiction at the "beginning," the positivity of divine being is meant to be safeguarded beyond both deism and pantheism. The saving of being's superessentiality depends on the contradiction, and God will soon have to find his life only by resolving this contradiction. The negation of the negation *is* then ultimately the absolute itself. For already Leibniz says, "all the possibles have a claim (*prétendant*) (!) to existence in God's understanding in proportion to their perfections" (!).[4] The dimension of ideality fragments into an otherness, which turns into the appetibile, the object of the divine will. Now we see more clearly what we said earlier concerning the ontological monads.

The perfection of the possibilia under discussion here already shows unambiguously how deeply the bonum, *quod habet rationem perfecti*, has been absorbed into the manifestness [*Offenbarkeit*] of the truth of divine ideality.

But what happens here in divine ideality comes to light in the dimension of the participation in being. Reason has granted the congealed being as being its own essence in its resistance to transnihilation. The true essence, as the seal of being's transnihilation, remains inaccessible to it. But because being clings to itself, the posited essence thus develops an appetitus, which seeks to lure being into giving itself. Therefore being has a "covetousness of being" next to itself, a reality that imposes itself on being in its hypostasization. To the essence's appetitus there corresponds the incipient procession of the being that clings to itself *through* the contradiction, into which reason leads being in order to mediate it to its subsistence. The satisfaction of this appetitus is called being's self-mediation, just as the essence's striving for existence (in God) will be the beginning of the absolute's self-mediation in the negation by means of the act of creation.

Being has therefore fallen prey at the same time to the essence, since it remains banished in the contradiction. We now have a better understanding of Leibniz's text: "Furthermore, in order to explain a bit more distinctly how temporal, contingent, or physical truths arise from eternal, essential or metaphysical truths, we must first acknowledge that since something rather than nothing exists, there is a certain urge for existence or (so to speak) a straining toward existence in possible things or in possibility or essence in itself; in a word, essence in and of itself strives for existence."[5] But the standing forth of the dimension of the possibilia likewise predetermines the path of creation. Creation occurs through the positing of the essence in actuality. Being will erect itself on the basis that is conceived as *always already* possible, and thus it will degenerate into an "imperfect effect."[6] The ens indifferens, which is meant to be a space held open as a mediating sphere for the positive reality, is now once again bound up in the essence. In the positing *ad extra* (by the voluntas divina), the mediation of the finite in the infinite, produced by the opening of the realm of divine ideality (metaphysics of spirit!), has been sacrificed once again to the factical reality and thus to the ontological monad. It came into play in the multiplicity of the finite, which "shines through" the lens of divine ideality.

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[4] G. W. Leibniz, "Principles of Nature and Grace, Based on Reason," in *Philosophical Essays*, trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989), 210.

Thomas has a different understanding. Because he has a place for the "nothing" in divine ideality, he does not need to allow the possibilia to come forth explicitly as such. Here, the immediate procession of the finite out of God in the sense of the positing of the positive res is preserved because the positive results from the nonsubsistence of being as being. Thus, Aquinas says, "We, on the other hand, hold that things proceed from God by way of knowledge [!] and intelligence, in which way there is nothing to prevent a *multitude of things from proceeding immediately* from the one first and simple being God, inasmuch as his wisdom contains all things."[7] Since, however, nothing that is other than being can be presupposed prior to it that would impose itself on being insofar as being is God's first effect, and since being itself does not subsist in its ideality, then the diversity of beings does not stem from a diversity of receiving subjects, which would represent something that God has anteriorly "pro-jected" [*ein "Vor-wurf" Gottes*], but from God himself: not because a diversity lay in God, but "because he knows diversity."[8] The finite shows itself herein in the mode of a nonbeing that lies in God. All *diversitas* that would have any sort of entitative character, even if it is *God* who thinks it, is always already a multiplicity of receptive subjects and thus a negation to be negated, the negation of which would ultimately be God's own self-actualizing life. The sublation of the finite as finite in the divine ideality, however, makes this negation of the negation impossible: "God's knowledge of non-beings and God's Word about non-beings are the same; because the Word of God contains no less than does the knowledge of God, as Augustine says.[9] Nevertheless the Word is expressive and operative of beings, but is expressive and manifestive of non-beings."[10] "Creatures are known to God not by a knowledge derived from the creatures themselves, but by His own essence. Hence it is not necessary that the Word should proceed from creatures [through the negation of otherness to God], although the Word is expressive of creatures."[11]

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[5] G. W. Leibniz, "On the Ultimate Origination of Things," in *Philosophical Essays*, 150.

[6] Scotus, *Op. Ox.* 4.1.1.7.

[7] *De pot.* 3.4.

We receive here yet again a powerful insight into the direction in which the progression of modern thinking flows.

B. Ideal Validity

The moment that the essences no longer have their place (in the mode of nonbeing) in God's ideality as a nihil intellectum, but instead the nothing's internal contradiction drives it from the divine intellect, God necessarily gets determined by an otherness to which he is subject. In other words, the displacement of the nothing "shrinks" God into an abstract absolute identity, afflicts the Logos with the other to himself, depotentiates the Father, and introduces the negation of the negation that belongs to the metaphysics of "Spirit." We have seen this over and over again as thinking has followed its path. The logicizing of the Holy Spirit or, in order to speak in the terms of God's essentialia attributa, the collapsing of reason and love, sapientia and bonitas, into one always implies the emergence of an otherness in ideality that has to be negated; it therefore also implies the essentializing of being.

Conversely, the emergent dimension of the possibilia revolutionizes the will. But since the voluntas is appropriated to the Holy Spirit, one can say that to the extent that God resolves himself as the will to will, which is now his proprium objectum, he is revealed as negation of the negation, that is, as "Spirit." To use Nietzsche's phrase, the "uncanniest of all guests," nihilism, emerges from precisely this dimension.

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[8] *In de Causis*, expos., 24.

[9] *De Trin.* xv, 14.

[10] *ST* 1.34.3.5.

[11] *ST* 1.34.3.3.

The nihil intellectum in the divine intellect is nevertheless the ultimate seal of the superessentiality of being, which is not in any way imprisoned by the essence and degraded into a potency that needs to be mediated to its positivity. The monadology we spoke of earlier therefore presupposes the disempowering of being.

But Thomas says, "The knowledge of God is the cause of things according as things are in His knowledge. Now that things should be eternal was not in the knowledge of God; hence no matter how [!] eternal the knowledge of God is, it does not follow that creatures are eternal."[12]

The monadology sketched out on the basis of the absolutized ideality of God draws its sustenance from the identification of bonum and verum. The displaced horizon of ideality, which had spread out into the dimension of logical possibility, possesses an absolute validity in itself, and this validity becomes the source of an ultimately binding necessity for the reality, which is now opaque in itself. Metaphysical truth is in this case thoroughly determined by essence, and the metaphysics of being is radically transformed into a metaphysics of spirit. The mediation of being in the ontological difference is therefore already the absolute "as Spirit." The "Spirit" is made into the origin of being, since this a priori is first posited in abstract essentiell identity with itself: "It is not because God is that he knows, but because he knows that he is," Eckhart says.[13] The entire span of German Idealism stands within the fate of the emergent critical dimension of Spirit. Thus Fichte defines the "Absolute Spirit" in the following way: "Spirit is the freedom that produces its content and produces being and knows itself to be identical with its thinking."[14]

But because it is only in the moment of bonicity that being is itself simultaneously as ideal and positively real—or, in other words, forms its unity *out* of these two moments—then bonicity, which now resides exclusively in ideality, can no longer be obligatory for the reality. Because being, lifted out *praeter res existentes*, dwells in intellectu solum as a concept, the bonum that dwells in ideality and is separated from the reality cannot avoid being condemned in the process of thinking to a mere "validity," a "general law," or ideal. But this eliminates the value's original obligatoriness. We can see the same thing with respect to ontological spatiotemporality.

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[12] *ST* 1.14.8.2.

[13] Cited by A. Dempf, *Meister Eckhart* (Freiburg: Herder, 1960), 49.

[14] Dempf, *Meister Eckhart*, 50.

The dimension of ideality disclosed itself to us in the "ad-vent of being" that arrives from the transnihilation, by which the ontological ad-vent testifies to itself by pointing to that which being always already is. But "pure validity" neutralizes the transnihilation. The only thing left over is pure "future." Because reason gets held up in the medium of the ideal vacillation, it thus falls victim to this pure yet-to-be and the absolute validity of the value in ideality turns into a pallid ideal, which at best only incipiently appears in reality but at bottom is separated from reality by a radical chasm. The "ideal" is nothing other than the goal of being's pure "yet-to-be," infinitely deferred, a yet-to-be that never catches up to itself in the positive reality. But finite reason has secretly identified itself with the ideality of being and therefore "precedes" any path that might be taken toward the goal. It has made everything a "thing-of-the-past" and left it behind. The absolutized ad-vent is therefore nothing but the flipside of the total "aging" of Dasein. Because man remains imprisoned in the particular reality that is unmediated with respect to these ideal validities, he thus either falls victim to rootless aestheticizing in view of the good and thus attempts to build bridges to it, or else he negates the "ideal obligation" simply and dedicates himself radically to "pure finitude" in opposition to the empty law in relation to which one inevitably comes up short. If he nevertheless attempts to realize these values, which are conceptualized in the hypostasis of being, then he falls repeatedly back into impotence and remains ultimately exhausted, thrown to the ground, in the consciousness of "always-becoming-guilty." The heart's vital impulse [*Strebekraft*] atrophies in this being cast adrift into the pure yet-to-be, and life loses its flexibility. The ideal validities turn quickly into phantoms that continue to haunt man and drive him into the angst of the eternal "Thou shalt," or disgust or bore him, turning him into a "realist" who is devoted to "the earth."

The only alternative that this speculative a priori leaves to finite reason is the reality of a factical existence, for which the only thing that exists is what has always already been established by the positing: namely, the res. Ultimately, the dominance of nihilism looms here, for the speculative measure of the positing of the positive res is wholly and completely provided by the nonsubsistence (the "nothing") of being. Because this transnihilation is eliminated as a sign of being's superessentiality through the substantializing of the same, the positing of reality therefore no longer has any weight. The res thus collapses inwardly, separated out into so many striated levels, or it is "catalogued," kata-logicized, in terms of essences, by the reason that ideality empowers to determine the differences internally within the order of essences. The reality of this absolutely valid ideality is nothing other than an opaque, misty veil cast over the "abyss of the nothing." The essence has no longer received the self-finitizing being, and being does not affirm itself in the positive subsistence. The vacillation of ideality now refuses any relation to reality, for any contact with it would only imply the experience of the nothing that lies just behind the nebulous facticity of that which lies given before one. Finite reason, to be sure, senses this abyss, and man fearfully holds his ground in the hypostasized ideal validity. Because the ground of reality constantly gives way, so to speak, reason thus saves itself by appealing to the security of "universal laws." Man finally goes so far as to cease searching, to give up on finding the roots of his thinking in the res, but becomes instead a harried vagabond, groundless and homeless in the truest sense of the word, a vagabond who is unable to take actual reality seriously because he is afraid of grabbing hold of the nothing. The settling of thought in pseudo-subsistence always ends in angst. Above all, it also robs man of the ontological present, being's turning-to-face-what-stands-before-it, and drives him into the ontological distances of the yet-to-be and the essential has-been. Everything is made "a-thing-of-the-past"—whether it be in the pure yet-to-come, that is, the vacillation of being, or in the absolutized essential past (res). In both cases, hope has vanished. Hope always exists in "being present"! But if we accept the angst, then we have taken the first step toward overcoming the stubborn vacillation of being in which man imprisons himself. The groundlessness of Dasein experienced in angst is only a sign of being's inability to cling to itself—over and against its finite subsistence. Thus angst, experienced ontologically, is threat and opportunity at the same time.

2. Ideal Validity and "Infinite Longing": Speculative Aberration and "Metaphysics as Reenactment"

What we just said could also be unfolded in terms of the relation between being and essence. Here, we come to the same result.

If being "as such" remains in itself, then it therefore no longer opens the space of the essence in order to transnihilate itself "through" this space. The essence loses the readiness to receive; it locks itself up and becomes a pure positing. This positing is not taken up inside of being's coming to itself, since the principles detach from one another. Reason, which arrogates to itself the perfect determination of the entity—that is, the res—by virtue of hypostasized being, now finds itself confronted with an other, which does not arise from being but is separated off from it as an isolated essence. If, however, nothing is external to being other than nonbeing, then this other stirs being up into a monstrous unrest, in the pressure to take possession of this other, to incorporate it. But this cannot fail to be a futile effort, since the substantialized being has already laid claim to everything itself a priori, so that the separated essence has in fact always already been negated into a non ens. In spite of this, being has to follow the original structure of the movement of finitization even in its distortion, and so it cannot avoid taking the other into itself, in order "then" to be fully itself. No matter how much it seeks to affirm its infinite positivity in the pseudo-subsistence, it now falls prey to the "pure essence." Because being cannot achieve itself in this collapse, insofar as it has already negated the essence, it comes to itself in an impotent yet-to-come. This can never come to an end, which becomes clear in the constellation of the endeavor. Thus, in its yet-to-come, being points toward the pure inability to achieve itself, while, conversely, the reason that is identified with being has virtually no power to escape this futility so that it can think things anew, because if it did, it would have to give up being in its pseudo-subsistence and have to listen obediently to the necessary sense of being. Finite reason therefore melts away in this process into "infinite longing," which in its futility is nothing but pure despair.

Here it becomes entirely clear that there are many different ways for finite reason to carry out being's movement of finitization and to interpret Dasein from this root. Because it is free, reason is not compelled to apprehend being in subservience to the necessary sense of being. What we have here is a failure to undergo the ontological difference. It becomes evident that finite reason makes a decision concerning its fate in the "*how*" of the enactment of the movement into subsistence, and that on the basis of this act it can take a stand [*Boden nehmen*] in a variety of ways in the dimension of the positive reality and can justify the specific structure of "the world of man." But this justification does not take place on its own, since the enactment of the movement of finitization, whereby man is always already what he is, has originally sublated and eliminated every failing and thus presents the condition of possibility for the aberration.

Nevertheless, such a "providing grounds" ["*Begründung*"] for the world is originally possible and actual. Man, as embodied spirit, orders his world every time he undergoes the crisis of being. We will have to discuss this at greater length later.

We nevertheless already see that the temptations we have been discussing have an eminently concrete significance. Man makes a decision concerning his existence in the enactment of being's movement of finitization. Thinking in the undergoing of the ontological difference is originally always a risk, because it is beset by the temptations that touch man in his most profound depths, insofar as being itself is *intimum cuilibet* and there is in obedience to being's superessentiality ultimately no longer any fixed, essentiell securities. There are a variety of ways that reason can succumb to these temptations. But the way that the inner consequences of such a fall unfolds shows us that the fundamental structure of the movement of finitization in its full breadth always remains operative in a determinative way. The aberration does not occur randomly; it has its sustaining law, its metaphysical teleology, the formal structures of which hold sway in the error as its inner law.

In this, however, the fundamental possibility of a "metaphysics as reenactment" arises, which we will have to explore more thoroughly later.[15] By the phrase "metaphysics as reenactment," we understand a speculative reductio of finite reason's endeavors to the unifying and life-giving roots that blossom forth in being's movement of finitization. The original locus of this a priori paradigm [*Maßgestalt*] is man, insofar as he is the subsisting focal point of being's movement of finitization.

It should have become clear, however, that this means something altogether different from the discovery of the absolute system, which is established by making the hypostasis of being the absolute beginning, a beginning that results from a freedom that has abstracted from everything and posits an identity between the absolute simplicity of thought and being as such.

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[15] A. Günther has already pointed out in *"Euristheus und Herakles," Meta-logische Kritiken und Meditationen* (Vienna: 1843), that we cannot refute one "system" by means of another, but only by discovering the root of the error—we have to demonstrate "that the principle of the method and thus the entire system is something one-sided.... When we discover this root, indeed, we no doubt also find the root of the truth, because this is not at all something we invent; instead, as something given, it needs to be taken up by the intellect and elevated into its circle of thinking. This process is not conditioned by the system, but instead, the system is conditioned by it" (6). With this, however, the inner possibility of an unfolding of the "logic of error" is given, which we are trying to conceive in a modest framework on the basis of the ontological root. Cf. my essay "Das Problem einer Metaphysik in der Wiederholung," *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie* 5/6 (1961/1962): 263–98.

Even so, the metaphysics as reenactment is not a single, exclusive approach next to others. But this claim shouldn't lead us to think we have to present the absolute system itself.

In the thinking that has nothing before it but the particular reality, which by itself is determined to dissolve finite reason in mediation, we sense this tendency toward absolute system even when the formulation does not make it explicit. Whenever thinking is enabled to "let being be," as being in its pure simplicity, then man, shut off from the necessary sense of being, finds himself on the emancipating path toward the "system to end all systems." To the extent that openness with respect to the exinanitio of being decreases, we lose the ability to hear what other thinkers say as an echo in the basic melody of the movement of finitization, which has been abandoned. The violent sealing up of the entity by the power of reason determined as will is at bottom only the arbitrary systematization of what was posited by absolute voluntas, goaded by the whip of the all-destroying speculative contradiction. Indeed, here metaphysics as reenactment is sacrificed to the panlogistically elaborated "Spirit" of the system to end all systems.

3. The Essence as "Material Womb": Materialism as Absolute System

We wish to lay bare a few more of the consequences that result from reason's failure to carry out the movement of finitization in obedience to being. In doing so, we will have to anticipate something that will have to be more fully explicated later, namely, the relationship between being and matter.

Matter and form are determinations of the essence and are related as such to esse, insofar as esse allows the essence to proceed from it in its movement into subsistence. "'To be' is attributed neither to the form alone nor to matter alone, but rather to the composite."[16] "'To be' itself is not an act that belongs to matter, but is rather the act of the whole substance."[17] Thus what is originally aimed at in being's movement into subsistence is the subsisting

[16] *SCG* 2.43.
[17] *SCG* 2.54.

substance: "wherefore neither matter, nor form, nor accident are said properly speaking to be created, but to be *concreated*: whereas a subsistent thing, whatsoever it may be, is properly said to be created."[18]

Now, we have seen that being presupposes the essence as a unity *per seipsam*, which is not a unity brought about through participation, insofar as the principle, by means of which being is mediated to the singular subsisting unity, in a certain sense cannot proceed from being itself but is instead given prior to being. If one were to say, however, that there is nothing external to being apart from nonbeing, and that the essence is not nothing and so must therefore arise from being as potency, this nevertheless does not contradict the first claim. Contradiction would arise if the movement into subsistence did not occur on the basis of the necessary sense of being, in which case the essence would be separated from and set against being in the positing, and being would cling to itself in the vacillation. If reason sees a "contradiction" between procession and positing, it is because it has spared being from the exinanitio and cast a veil of essentiality over it; that is, finite reason has substantialized the crisis. Being in this case circumvents the "genuine" essence, which is posited as really distinct from it, together with which it is always already positive reality. Through reason, it anticipates its kenosis and transnihilation and surreptitiously secures "concrete" subsistence for itself beyond the exinanitio. Having always already become positive reality in this way, being degenerates into the res and is engulfed by it. The "first" really distinctly posited essence—that is, natura—is replaced by a "second nature," which is mediated to being as hypostasis, a second nature that suspends being in the a priority of the ontological vacillation. But insofar as being founders among the many res, the radicalized a priori of ideality is suddenly transformed into an unfettered a posteriori within the realm of reality. Because reason has rejected the legitimate exinanitio, being no longer has any genuine difference from its true concrete subsistence. This applies to man and every other being in the same way. Above the genuine subsistence of being, on a higher level, as it were, there is a new movement into subsistence, which draws its sustenance from the negation of being's exinanitio, a movement that is acted out [*inszeniert*] speculatively. Thus a "new world" is erected and being, which is fixed in ideality, is "transubstantiated" by man into this new world. But because the ontological difference is circumvented, because the "not-yet" is eliminated and everything is gathered reductively into the "absolute concept," being as being is thus extended into its subsistence, so that a pseudo-form of the ipsum esse subsistens becomes manifest in finitude. The earthly paradise rises up, and reason is rapturously caught up in an immanent *visio beatifica*. This is something we have seen before.

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[18] *De pot.* 3.1.12.

Let us go deeper! If the essence has its unity through itself, insofar as it mediates being to subsistence, then it is posited, for reason, next to being in a specific way, and being is only too easily grasped as "something dependent" [*das "Angewiesene"*].

We see how quickly thinking falls prey to one-sided abstraction, wherein temptation occurs entirely unnoticed. It consists "only" in the fact that one keeps one's eye on something altogether correct and says, "See? The essence is given prior to being, being has to come to subsistence 'through' the essence.... Indeed, being is altogether nonsubsistent!" Insofar as *this* is what one points to—namely, something entirely legitimate, something that absolutely has to be kept in mind—thinking falls into the trap: "And, now, it is truly the case that the essence, which has its unity through itself, is posited as such ... and being precisely does *not* subsist in the vacillation, ... which thus means that it is in some sense 'deficient.'" The "poverty" of being as the revelation of its positivity is here changed by thinking into the foolishness of impotence! Doesn't the essence thus become in fact that which is truly necessary?

Thinking never ceases to be exposed to this abyssal ambiguity. But if reason in reflection falls into the enticement to such a speculative exaggeration, then in that moment it loses sight of being as the perfection of all perfections, the crisis of being is already canceled out, the act of being gets essentialized and turned into a clare et distincte, purified *intelligibile*. What we are facing here is indeed the deepest of all temptations. It can play itself out in a variety of ways in the most diverse realms of human existence. But it is only when it becomes clear that the entire existence of man stands on the foundation of what we called being's movement of finitization that we are able to understand what is determinative in this temptation in the various individual worldly dimensions.

Let us return to the temptation we explained above. The speculative view gets veiled, as it were, in the posited unity of the essence, and already the movement of finitization shifts its weight onto the side of reality or, what amounts to the same, into the ideal vacillation of hypostasized being. Being is immediately disempowered, and thus its nonsubsistence ("nothing") is posited in an absolute way; indeed, this is where the res gets the metaphysical weight of its positivity [*Setzungsgewicht*]. Being "now becomes itself" entirely on the foundation of the detached and isolated essence and indeed in the absolutized variety and multiplicity of the finite, because the essence retains its original "task" in a formal-structural way even in the most profound aberration: namely, the division of being.

Now all necessity lies in the essence, since it has been speculatively made into the ground that mediates being *tout court*.

The essence thus has being in the pure transnihilation "next" to itself (absolutized ideality as "nothing"!). Being has from first to last turned into the nihilistic "nothing." At the same time, all of being's necessity in terms of its identity with itself lies in the essence. This is the place in, through, and with which being lays claim to itself [*sich behauptet*]. But now the essence no longer receives being, since the pull toward subsistence does not occur in listening obedience to the necessary sense of being, but is conducted by the essence itself. The essence instead produces being on the basis of the ontological necessity latent in it. The receptive essence thus turns into the absolute being-generating "womb," which ejects beings from itself and in this way acts out the movement into subsistence. In reality, the things that are ejected are not beings in their concreteness, because the essence is not concerned about being, but rather about itself. The ejection of beings from the womb of the nonreceptive essence is therefore at the same time a swallowing up of being by the essence. But because the ground of this process, as we saw, is the absolutizing of the contradiction that lies in ideality, the ejection and swallowing up of beings must be carried out according to the rhythmic pulse of the dialectic of the pure contradiction. The essentiell womb ejects the beings from itself in order to dissolve them once again into its absolute unity *per seipsam*. Because being's transnihilation toward the res out of the bonitas divina is sealed in the infinite variety and multiplicity of beings, and because this variety (!) is expelled [*ausgewiesen*] beyond the essence paradigmatically "through" unessential matter, it follows that the material enabling dimension is incorporated in an uncanny way into the essentiell production process along with the absolutizing of the transnihilation. Matter as concreatum[19] becomes the co-generating ground and is identified with the essence. Since being is no longer understood in its superessentiality, then the nonessential dimension of matter, which is the ultimate seal of being's exinanitio and the revelation of its superessentiality, has to be neutralized; that is, it has to be reduced back to the essence. Matter is thus identified with the always already real essence, which has acquired an entitative character and is determined on the basis of the positing of the essence along with the absolutized, persisting, and perduring reality as always already actual material ground.[20]

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[19] Cf. *De pot.* 3.1.12.

This giving birth to the absolute, materialized essence is eternally posited, for the positing of the essence has its seal in the reality. But this is what being intends, as it always already is. Thus the infinite womb of matter also has the imprint of the "always already" indissolubly in itself and subjects everything else to itself. It becomes the "beginning." Just as the substantialized being is predetermined in the dimension of its "ontological yet-to-come" and expands itself into eternal longing, so too does the maternal womb of matter constantly generate the nihilated being, bringing it to be what it is. And this activity never slackens because the being that it is supposed to bring to itself is unlimited and infinite. There is thus no end to being's coming to itself "through" the essence. At the same time, however, the process of giving birth is superseded, and what supersedes it is in fact the past of the matter that has been determined as absolute essence. A process thus emerges, which presents itself as the dialectic of the "absolute has-been," the progress of which into the "yet-to-come" is nothing but the flipside of its hopeless, despairing past: the ontological difference is closed!

But even in its fallen state, the essence maintains its original "function." This means, now, that it perfects the simple, nonsubsisting being and places it at the beginning as *effectus imperfectissimus* in relation to this perfection.

The essence reveals its absolute necessity in this bringing of being to perfection. It is unable, however, to release being from itself as perfected in a single step; if it could, the endless process would on the one hand fall away, and on the other hand, what would the essence do afterward, since it indeed exhausts itself entirely in the perfectioning of being? It can thus bring being to itself only in a continuous progress, and indeed as always better and always more deeply mediated, for this is precisely what reveals the perverted perfection, the ambiguous *ratio boni*. The necessary sense of being speaks here in a radically perverted way, for the bonum has the ratio perfecti in itself. The materialized essence, as the "maternal womb," therefore constantly must drive progress forward with an absolute assurance, and indeed with the same intensive assurance that characterized its original openness to being as the space of its self-mediation to subsistence. The progress cannot be carried out beyond the dimension that is always already posited by the material womb and therefore sets the absolute standard that provides the measure for everything else. The progress is a purely material progress, which proceeds to such an extent that being ultimately has to assert itself and attain itself in that progress as the act of acts and the perfection of all perfections.

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[20] This speculative necessity can be also unambiguously verified historically through the expressions of those thinkers who, having lost sight of being's superessentiality, have at the same time attributed an "entitative character" to matter; cf. Ulrich, *Inwiefern ist die Konstruktion*, chaps. 1 and 2.

Because the self-assertion of being comes to display itself in ontological spatiotemporality and is sublated in the "fullness of time," ontological spatiotemporality is now perverted. Along with it, a perverted "fullness of time" becomes manifest, which "legitimizes" itself in the perfection of essentiell, material progress. All of this has to play itself out by virtue of the speculative a priori in the immanent dimension of the material, maternal ground. The new "fullness of time," the paradise of the "new world," emerges from these material depths.

The essence has become the absolute ordination of being to itself. Because of finite reason's identification with being, the essence now becomes that which is thoroughly definable *simpliciter*, in contrast to the "irrational" origin of the essence from the ipsum esse non subsistens. The procession of being out of the essence and into the concretion of worldly objectivity is thus nothing other than the recuperation of the "irrational," and not yet defined, essentielly developed realm of being's nonsubsistence. What the essence gives birth to are definitions, for the essences *habent definitionem*,[21] whereas Aquinas writes that "being (*ens*) is not included in the definition of a creature because it is neither a genus nor a difference. So it is participated in as something that *does not exist as part of the essence of the thing*."[22]

These definitions make everything transparent and subject to determination. Being's diffusion and multiplication, which springs from the bonitas divina, and the ontological difference, remain obscure for these definitions. The unity of the essence, its *unitas per seipsam*, by contrast, becomes the "true light" that enlightens all men. Therefore everything that the essence generates is, on the immediate basis of the origin, ordered into absolute, pure intelligibility and transparent in the cold light of essentiell necessity. At bottom, however, matter congeals in an impenetrable darkness, which is dominated by the "pure spirit," concerned with the *definitiones essentiarum*. This "pure spirit" is the reason that has gotten caught up in the ontological vacillation and that negates the incarnational act of being's exinanitio. The intelligibility stops at the unfathomable darkness of matter and necessarily separates itself from it, according to the constellation within the ontological difference—ideality and reality having been separated from each other! This is true as much for infinite spirit as for finite spirit: "There are two ways in which divisibility can be considered: in terms of the ability to resolve what is divided in either an objective manner or a subjective manner. Objectively, insofar as effective *matter* depends on divine representations, *it is as resolvable as the infinite intellect considers* (!) *it resolvable*. The subjective divisibility of matter does not extend beyond our perceptions."[23] The determining and (!) dominating of matter by essentiell intelligibility come to clear expression here.

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[21] 1 *Sent*. 2.1.3.

[22] *Quodl*. 2.2.1.

The essence has forsaken its receptio, limitatio, and coarctio of being in this endeavor. The essence gives birth without having received [*empfangen* = "conceived"]: the stillbirth of being. The essence's circumscribing and limiting of being reaches their end in the rational definition, and the essence never tires of constructing such definitions, though at the same time it wants everything to achieve its proper self-identity precisely by way of being circumscribed in these definitions. Because in this way everything that exists is gathered up into the absolute system and sublated per definitionem, then there are also no longer any temptations, no falling prey of thinking, no illumination of the falling prey on the basis of the positivity of being: everything works. Bonitas as *plenitudo entis* has grown cold in the absolute system. The "spirit as love" ends up logicized.

In terms of supernatural revelation, one can therefore say: In the absolute system, in which the Holy Spirit is transformed into the "spirit" of being's pseudo-hypostasis, into the "spirit" of the absolute essence, into the "spirit" of the absolute material womb, there is "no sin." Sin exists only as the failure of intelligibility; bonum and verum are identified, love is turned into a function of knowledge, and science becomes the absolute goal. There is "no righteousness" here, because the Logos is itself "substantialized" as the personified Typos of being as being, and the Father has his entire necessity in the Son, which means "Jesus does not go to the Father." He has instead brought the Father to power—by resisting him (cf. Part A, chap. IV.5, this volume). The justification of the finite as the infinite yes of love has not appeared in the Word of God, but rather the finite degenerates into the material (!) of the negation and self-assertion of the Logos. Here, all justification has been eliminated. What follows from this is that there is also "no judgment," since the prince of this world has turned into a logicized function of the negation of negation. No sin is possible anymore in this system, which is under the dominion of the absolute definition of the omnipotent essence. But the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin. In this system, in which being no longer hands itself over in the exinanitio to beings and infinitely affirms being as finite precisely in the sublation of the finite in God, there is no longer any room for righteousness, because everything has grown cold in the logicized unilaterality, in the "righteousness of the hypostasis of being," and the absolute definition gives "to each his own." The spirit of God, however, makes manifest that there is indeed a righteousness. No judgment rules in the absolute system, since nonbeing has been made into a function of being's self-mediation in the whirling of the absolute contradiction. But the Spirit of God convicts the prince of this world, and the world along with him, of sin, because the prince of this world has already been condemned, and being has already communicated its infinite positivity as love and has not arrived at this positivity only through the negation of negation. The "spirit" of the negation of negation stands against the Holy Spirit of God.

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[23] As G. Ploucquet says in *Principia de substantiis et phaenomenis*, (Frankfurt: 1764), chap. 2.

Because the necessary sense of being is the ground in which ontological spatiotemporality has its roots, and the Holy Spirit holds sway as the "Spirit of history," the absolute definition of the system of systems experiences this pathos of history and this pseudo-certainty, the consciousness (in the pseudo-"present" [*bonum*]) of the perfection of the yet to come, which gives rise to a perverted hope. But love has been put to death.

It would be profoundly illuminating to develop the relationship between consciousness and hope in more detail. We see what sorts of perspectives open up here. This is the root of nihilistic materialism.

4. Being's Pseudo-Subsistence and the Self-Enclosed Essence

But these implications bring to light something even more profound! The essence gives birth without having received being. It is posited in an absolute way, and being has become manifest in an abyssal nothingness from which the entity emerges. But the nothingness of the act of being is not determined on the basis of the crisis of being. This would imply that the convertibility of being and "nothing" reveals itself in the essence's reception of being, for the essence is the crisis of being's transnihilation. But the isolated essence, which has become the absolute "one" (there is no longer a multiplicity of essences, since, in the ruin of love, the numerositas entium has merged together in the womb of the one essence, through which the hypostasis is mediated) though it does not receive being, nevertheless gives birth to everything out of itself. The essence, which is the space of the necessary sense of being opened on the basis of the origin, as "possibility" ["*Möglichkeit*"], has lost all of the "favor" ["*Mögen*"] of being. The essence is no longer being's enabling ground. Being can do "nothing." It cannot release its enabling ground from itself: the essence gives birth without having conceived. The birth is therefore not a gratitude for having received something, and thinking, as the enactment of the movement of finitization, is not a thanking (cf. Part A, chap. VI.1.D, this volume). Being in the pseudo-subsistence is self-seeking; it no longer needs to be received. The essentiell abyss of the material womb is therefore nothing other than the immanent reflection of being, which has been eliminated as the likeness of divine goodness. Being as hypostasis has lost all authorship, generativity [*Zeugeschaft*], fruitfulness [*Mehrerschaft*]. With respect to the connection with what has been said, we can draw the conclusion: all *fatherhood* is eliminated.[24] The enactment of the movement of finitization is in fact the exposition of human existence! What comes to expression in the ontological vacillation is the essence's negation of all receptivity, and thus the empire of the nonreceptive "stillborn" is erected in this absolute system of the definition, of infinite progress, of ingratitude, and of the immanent worldly paradise, out of the womb of the essence, which has imprisoned the

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[24] The relationship between "being and fatherhood" is something we will reflect on more profoundly in the reformulations concerning *SCG* 4.11. Let us also note in this context that the logicizing of the Holy Spirit always coincides with the depotentiating of Fatherhood!

Logos in metaphysical incest and depotentiated God the Father, out of the womb of the essence, which mediates everything to itself, which to be sure "permits" being, but in the reception no longer takes things seriously, no longer bears fruit in gratitude, no longer enacts thanksgiving from out of the exinanitio of being! It thus reveals itself as "the great harlot."

But here we need to stop and listen [*auf-hören*]! It would be easy to object that we are introducing the theological theme of the Apocalypse into metaphysical reflection. But we wish to deny this emphatically, for the process of thinking shows unambiguously that it comes to pass in every instance on the basis of being and has its history on the basis of the enactment of the movement of finitization. To be sure, we do not deny that it is always already embraced and borne by the "fullness of time." It is only from this perspective that we can understand that the perversion of speculative thinking is ultimately not philosophy but pseudo-theology.

5. Being and the Absolute Essence: Nihilism

There is yet another thing that comes to expression in the absolutized positing of the essence, or, what amounts to the same, in the hypostasizing of being. The substantializing of being as being always implies the exaggeration of the "nothing" in the sense of *non subsistens*, which hands being over to the essence, insofar as it hypostasizes itself at the same time as absolute "nothing." The absolute essence thus conjures up nihilism, insofar as all beings are called "beings" on the basis of this divinized "transnihilation" of being.

Now, conversely, if all necessity lies in the essence, then the only thing left is being in the exclusive sense of the nihilistic "nothing." But if the absolute ground, which ejects all beings from itself, hides this fact—and it is only too easy for it to do so since it simulates a pseudo-reality—it nevertheless has its roots in the "nothing." The fundamental structure of the movement into subsistence always and inevitably remains, and that means in this context that the positing of reality illuminates speculatively the abiding medium of the absolute essence on the sole basis of the transnihilation of being. But if the transnihilation is no longer carried out on the basis of the bonum, and thus for the sake of being, the essence, and the reality it implies, gets absolutized. In this case, the only thing left over is the absolute *non subsistens* as the "nothing" of nihilism. The history of nihilism is nothing other than the history of the essentializing of being, which coincides with the foundering of Fatherhood through the metaphysical incest of the Logos in the not-yet-negated otherness to God (matter!). Everything that has been said above about the absolute system applies also to nihilism. In terms of the ontological determination of place, it comes to lie on the side of pseudo-subsisting being, which at the same time makes the "nothing" (isolated in itself!) into the absolute constitutive element of the things that are.

But how does man pass from this speculative a priori into the enactment of the movement of finitization? He is "there" ["*da*"] in the way that he carries out being's movement of finitization. The opaque facticity of the "world" lies over against the reason that is caught up in the ontological vacillation. Being no longer has anything to do with the essence. But because even the pseudo-subsistence draws its sustenance from its original form, which means in this context from the crisis of being in ideality, then this crisis must manifest itself in a new form on the basis of the specific approach of the unfolding of being. Since nothing can be external to being, then even absolutized reality cannot be external to it. Man therefore has to exert himself to open reality up on the basis of ideality and to overpower it. From the perspective of the hegemonic place of the ontological vacillation, everything lies at the feet of emancipated reason.

But the positive reality is alienated from being and man is "alienated" even in the beginning of his taking up of the world; he is subject to the dominion of the hypostasis of being. Man can approach reality only insofar as he, identified with the pseudo-vacillation, carries out a "transnihilation" and takes upon himself the "suffering of the worker," in order to transform the world into a home, in order to take up residence in it. This exinanitio, in which the Logos's kenosis is recapitulated in the *Gestalt* of the worker, however, is nothing other than the pathos of the overpowering of the yet-to-be-overpowered "other" to being, which man prepares himself to capture, to compose, to organize, and to arrange into the absolute system. But because, on the basis of the hypostasis of being in which the will to power has its roots, the positive reality is nothing other than the *extension* of being as being, man thus possesses "nature as his body," which he obtains in the suffering of expropriation and presents *as himself* (Marx). This necessarily occurs in such a way that finite reason, as "emancipated" through empowerment by the hypostasis of being, transnihilates itself without transnihilating itself in truth, that man expropriates himself and gives himself, without giving himself, that he sacrifices without sacrificing, and that he thus calls forth an abyssal dominion of ambiguity in every dimension of his existence. This dominion corresponds to the pseudo-obedience of the Logos, which first achieves the perfectly communicated divine nature and helps the Father to the throne (cf. Part A, chap. IV.5, this volume). Nihilism thus unveils itself at bottom as the hidden struggle with the Fatherhood of God.

From the overpowering of the positive reality, which passes on to man the task of being's absolute transnihilation, man, however, returns once again to the ontological vacillation. On the basis of the ambiguous self-emptying that terminates in the mastery of the world, that which is turns at every instance into man's opponent, into the other, which he has only apparently—with respect to the pseudo-obedience to the necessary sense of being—fashioned into the human world. At bottom, he never manages to escape his enslavement to the posited essence; he does not attain the innermost heart of the bonum, but instead the good constantly presents itself in the transnihilation as worker.

Now, as worker, man has released the "other" from himself, planned it through and through and defined it; he has emancipated the world as a store of resources, which "automatically" begins to take on its own reality, wherein that which is properly aimed at in this whole endeavor, the concrete subsistence (!) of mediated being, presents itself in a perverted form. But because the substantialized being as being is "nothing," and anyone who comes to rest in it is immediately thrown back upon the factical reality, man-the-worker's pathway to emancipation is thus only the flip side of his enslavement to the "automaton" that he has posited. The increase of the dominating power of the hypostasis of being contra deum binds him into the growing system of the thoroughly organized reality. Over and over again, man surrenders himself to the "redeeming" transnihilation in order to bring the world home, but he founders ever more deeply through alienation to the reality in the "other."

Here, a preparatory unfolding of the convertibility of being and "nothing" in the ideal vacillation fails to redeem. The speculative illumination of the root of nihilism to be sure loosens the soil for an original, new reception and entry into obedient listening [*Ins-Hören-Kommen*] with respect to the necessary sense of being. But ultimately nothing comes of this. To the contrary, thought's attempt to interpret the crisis of being in the perversion of nihilism grows for thinking into a monstrous danger, since the overcoming is never "settled on" ["*ausgemacht*"] in the crisis of being as being; the "dialogue" concerning this theme can occur quite peacefully in this crisis. But the decision is made solely in the ontological difference, which cannot be calculated. It is not made by thought's sustaining itself in the crisis through reflection, in order to think through the speculative a priori of nihilism, but instead by opening itself *in an essential way* to the necessary sense of being, to being as love.

How deeply all of this concerns man we will show in later discussions, in which we attempt to unfold man as totum potestativum, as the original focal point of being's movement of finitization.

IX

Being and the *Analogia Entis*

We are now coming to the final section of the first main part of our work, in which we will attempt to present the analogy of being from the perspective of being's movement of finitization.

1. The Division [*Scheidung*] of Being and Nonbeing and the Positive Reality

The movement into subsistence aims at substance: "neither the matter nor the form nor even being itself can be termed that which is.... the whole substance itself, however, is that which is. And 'to be' itself is that by which the substance is called a being."[1] In our speculative interpretation of the dimension of participation in being, we saw that the division of being and nonbeing drew its meaning from the convertibility of being and "nothing," which does not imply that a contradiction stands at the beginning. The entire weight of the entity's finitude was revealed in the illumination of being's nonsubsistence ("nothing").[2] But just as the bonitas divina stood out in the exinanitio of being, so too did the variety and multiplicity of the finite represent a single sign of the fact that being is participated in as the likeness of divine goodness. The variety of the finite is thus not the furthest diffusion of the "basic movement" ["*Grundbewegung*"] of the participation in being, but is instead the positive proof of its legitimacy.

The crisis of being, in which the *numerositas creaturarum* has its origin, nevertheless cannot be determined as a division of being and "nothing," or otherwise the "to be" itself would become a being. The division of being and nonbeing concerns the positive, subsisting, concrete res. This is something we must especially keep in mind in the following discussion.

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[1] *SCG* 2.54.

[2] Cf. A. Marc, "Dialectique," 182: "Far from avoiding the problem of origins, the critique of the idea of the nothing poses this problem and even provokes it with greater rigor through the simultaneous appearance of the ideas of contingency and necessity."

It is true that, in being's movement of finitization, there is a division of being and nonbeing, and that this division results from being's transnihilation; that is, it results in the positive reality that springs from this transnihilation and is always already posited. We therefore saw that there is no contradiction in affirming these two statements: "Being and 'nothing' are interchangeable" and "Nothing is external to being apart from nonbeing." The division has always already been carried out in the positively posited substance. Nevertheless, the act that grounds and makes possible the speculative determination of this division of being and nonbeing is the movement of finitization, which never starts out from the locus of the contradiction in order to arrive at this division—that is, the positive affirmation of being—for being is always already positive reality prior to the movement into subsistence.

It is only when we substitute the reflection of pneumatic reason for the necessary sense of being, which sustains and fuels the pull of being toward subsistence, and thus neutralize it that the division of being and nonbeing that has always already been achieved in the concrete substance collapses into a *process of dividing up*, in which being proceeds to exclude from itself the nonbeing enclosed within it and the "outcome" (singular res!) of the entire movement ultimately produces a "divisio of ens and non ens." Here, thinking has fallen prey to the following temptation: It places the entity outside of being as an extension of it, and the essentiell linearity of this extension is loosened up only by the whirl of negation, which is what renders it "superessential."

2. The Division of Being and Nonbeing and the Path toward God

The variety and multiplicity of entities have their ground in the division of being and nonbeing. As the likeness of divine goodness, being comes to subsistence only in the *numerositas creaturarum*. By contrast, if being were to cling to itself, it would eliminate the welling up of variety from being, since it would already take for granted the division of being and nonbeing a priori in the ideal vacillation as substantialized being. In the diffusion of hypostasized being, the entities would be swallowed up by the univocal ground that sustains them. The concrete would have to appear as an extension of being as being, which is deducible from it. Because the entities would in this case float in the sea of being as so many blocks of ice, insofar as they are nothing but the hardening of being (absolutized reality), the entire endeavor would seem to be justified by the following sentence: "It is not possible for this to be, namely, that one ens be divided from another ens insofar as it is ens, for nothing is divided from ens except non ens."[3] But because being is "nothing" and does not eclipse God as ontological vacillation, there is a path to God from all beings that does not end in the univocity of mere *esse completum et simplex*.[4] Now, if being's transnihilation is no longer seen in all its sharpness, and thinking no longer opens itself up in an essentiell obedience to the necessary sense of being, then, because the esse praeter res resides [*west*] *in intellectu solum* and thus collapses into subjectivity, the path to God would be entirely transposed as a process of analogy that occurs inside the subject. The finite in this case immediately defines itself over against the ontological vacillation and becomes absolute. But reason can then achieve the analogical ascent to God only insofar as it in turn nihilates the univocal ontological vacillation through the *non subsistens*. Thus the subject takes over for itself the analogous role of the finite that mediates a way to the infinite. Subjectivity now lifts the finite up into the "vacillation," and so takes the place of God's omnipotent loving presence, but only in appearance, for the bonitas divina is already a priori neutralized by the hypostasis of being. The enactment of contingency—that is, being's movement of finitization in the sense of the "proof of the existence of God"—is also transposed into the "subject" precisely to the extent that the positive reality is absolutized and being founders in the essence. This is something one could quite clearly verify even historically.

3. The Division of Being and Nonbeing and the Path toward the Analogy of Being

When we reach out speculatively into being [*Vorgriff auf Sein*], then, because "to be" does not subsist, we experience that God holds creation in existence through the absolute presence of love. This presence of God gets reduced if the bonitas divina is shifted back into ideality, and an indifferent sphere of preplanned [*vorentworfener*] entitative essences emerges in the space of the divine intellect, essences that must stand from the beginning already in an otherness to God and can manifest themselves "subsequently" in their createdness *only* as "really posited" essences transposed into reality or, in other words, as positive res. The nonsubsistence that is thus radicalized therefore comes to be identified with the divine will's absolute intervention [*Durchgriff*] in the positing of the res. The voluntas divina is left to enact the "transnihilation" of the hypostasis of being that is implied in the essence's otherness to God.

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[3] *In de Trinit.* 2.4.1.co2.

[4] Jean Petrovici therefore calls the idea of nonbeing a "goad": "The goad that drives us on to the conception of the absolute." "L'Idée de Néant," *Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques* 1 (1933): 299.

But because being, as *intimum cuilibet*, is "nothing" between God and the creature, then God's omnipotent loving presence is not limited to the absolute intervention of the voluntas divina. For the love of God is anything but a function of the divine intellect, which is "bestirred" to conceive the essences in the modus of nonbeing in order to gather up divine ideality into the mediation of the absolute's infinite identity and therefore in need of the "transnihilating" voluntas.

We must reflect on the implications of the division of being and nonbeing in this context!

Thomas says, "But nothing is divided from ens except non ens. Similarly, one ens is not divided from another ens unless there lies within that ens the negation of the other one."[5]

Thus, if the speculatively determined "movement" of the division of being and nonbeing means nothing other than being's movement into subsistence, then the positive establishment of entities "implies" nonbeing, even though the division of being and nonbeing at the same time has its seal in it! Just as being is radically distinct from nonbeing by virtue of its positivity, so too is it a negatio that divides any given entity (which is called a being by virtue of being) from other entities. This negatio is not a negatio of *being* qua being, since the concrete substance would thereby be able to close itself off from the crisis of being, but rather "per negationem *illius* entis"! If one entity were divided from another through the negation of being as being in the crisis, then this would mean that the negation of the entity with respect to being would refer to the hypostasis of being. Otherwise, the entity's negation of being as being would imply the radicalizing of the nonsubsistence of being and would elevate the "nothing" into speculation's point of departure.

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[5] *In de Trinit.* 2.4.1.co2; cf. *De pot.* 7.2.4.

In this case, the positive establishment of the entity itself would be canceled out, which is why the entity's negation of being as being in the crisis would likewise be made impossible. Thus one entity would not be able to negate another one. Thomas therefore does not say "per negationem *entis*" but rather "illius entis." It is true that one entity is divided from another by virtue of the fact that each entity includes the negation of the other. This has its ground in the fact that both this entity and that one subsist concretely on the basis of the transnihilation of being as being, that is, on the basis of the resolution of the division [*Entscheidung der Scheidung*] of being and nonbeing. In a certain sense, the finite entity thus harbors the negation of being as being in itself. But this negation does not refer to being as being "before" its finitization, that is, "before" its self-affirmation in concrete subsistence. Instead, the negation refers to being precisely as subsisting in the variety and multiplicity of beings. Otherwise, the entity would be posited "before" being's transnihilation, which is a contradiction. This is why the negation, which is included within this entity insofar as it is not the other, does not refer to being as being, but to the other entity. If this (!) entity were able to negate being in the crisis, then this would mean that being is "nothing" except *in this single entity*. But that implies the pseudo-subsistence of being in ideality; the non subsistens would thus be at the same time absolutized and the entity empowered to the negation of being on the basis of being's radicalized transnihilation. But being can never come to itself in a single entity. We already attempted to explain this point earlier.

Thus one can say: Because the concrete entity is always already positive reality on the basis of being's transnihilation, then the negation does not refer to being as such, but to the "other being." We see that the basic trait of being's movement of finitization comes to light in the division of being and nonbeing.

Conversely, we have to keep in mind that the *negatio illius entis* would not be possible if the negation did not originally refer also to being in the crisis; precisely by virtue of the fact that this entity is not being—that is, being cannot be made into an entity—this entity includes in itself the possibility of the negation of that entity. It is only because being and "nothing" exchange themselves for each other in the crisis that the variety of beings in their positive subsistence is possible in the first place.

But something still more profound opens up here! If this entity negated only being as being, then, as we saw, the nonsubsistence of being would be absolutized. There would therefore be no other entity but this single one, which would swallow up into itself every other entity in an absolute univocity. But if being is sacrificed to the transnihilation, it is this same undifferentiated being that would affirm itself in the variety and multiplicity of beings. In this case, the absolute univocity of the "one entity" would in the same moment be forced asunder through the absolutized transnihilation into the infinite variety of isolated positings, which would be utterly dissociated from each other without the mediation of the simple and complete "to be." Thus these posited things are "always other," because they are never themselves in concrete subsistence. The concrete substance dissolves in the frenzy of otherness. In this case, the absolute univocity turns out to be, at bottom, absolute equivocity: *All analogy of being is destroyed!*

Because this is how things stand, one can infer that the unfolding of being's movement of finitization at the same time presents the analogia entis, which comes properly into view only on the basis of the origin of the convertibility of being and "nothing." This is something we must now pursue!

4. The Root of the Analogy of Being and Being's Movement of Finitization: Equivocal and Univocal Predication

It is clear that if being clung to itself in resistance to its kenosis, then the multitude of entities would not be divided from one another and would disappear into the impenetrable, univocal medium of being. Being would have to forfeit its exemplar causality, its character of being uncaused to the extent that its being would gradually founder in the causal enactment of its movement into subsistence. In clinging to itself, being falls prey to absolute finitude. As a result of this speculative a priori, the finite as finite would fragment into absolute variety, just as it would dissolve at the same time in the general medium of being. The entities would merge into a single, univocal being and would have to find their ground in this univocation, since, indeed, the univocal hypostasis makes this fragmentation of entities possible, and then attempts to affirm itself therein as an existing thing.

We see that an overemphasis on the *esse completum et simplex* "revolutionizes" itself into a univocal medium; that is, the absolute division "revolutionizes" itself into finitude. But an overemphasis on the nonsubsistence of being draws it immediately into the positive reality and substantializes it into the "existing state" ["*Zuständlichkeit*"] of a perduring medium of being. The only thing left in relation to this absolutized *non subsistens* is the infinite variety of posited things. Nothing is unified any longer in the unity of being. That which ought to be mediated to itself through the essences into concrete subsistence—namely, being—has from the outset fallen completely prey to the transnihilation. Pure ontological equivocity rears its head!

But if, by contrast, "being and nothing" are interchangeable by virtue of the necessary sense of being, then the *modus medius* of analogy becomes possible. It is only on the basis of this convertibility that the false constructions of equivocation and univocation can be determined as aberrations.

This modus medius is therefore anything but analogy's "golden middle way," or the absolute metaphysical weapon with which all metaphysical battles can be fought, because being's movement of finitization never permits itself to be objectified as a speculative instrumentarium. If one keeps in mind that analogy has its roots in the superessential dimension of the crisis of being, then one will understand how much mischief can be done with the "formula of analogy." In this "formula," the crisis of being gets subsumed into reflection all the way "to the end." Our speculative unfolding, however, makes evident which temptations beset us and how difficult they are to withstand, precisely when it is a matter of the "commonplace" of the analogy of being. Equivocity and univocity have their speculative center in the movement into subsistence.

Thomas says, "Equivocal terms, analogous terms, and univocal terms are divided in different ways. *Equivocal* terms are divided *according to the different things they signify*; *univocal* terms are divided *according to the various differences that distinguish them*; but *analogous* terms are divided *according to the diversity of modes* (of being)."[6] This text aims precisely at the point that represents the speculative locus for the unfolding of analogy in the dimension of the participation in being. If the essence as posited is separated from being, then the positive reality gets "reduced" to itself alone. But if the movement of finitization, as a causal act, means the same thing as the constitution of the finite substance, then the constitution of the substance is incorporated into this moment precisely to the extent that the moment of reality is taken for itself. The entity, as substance, becomes simply res. As res, that which is becomes explicit in the infinite variety of its finitude. From the absolutizing of the res, what remains left over in the end is only the multiplicity of posited things. The "unity of the essence," however, receives its measure as the dimension of the obedience of being. If this superessentiality of the "to be" founders in oblivion, then the positive res decomposes from within. The speculative path of aberration thus passes from the abstract fixing of the *non subsistens*, which is no longer convertible with the completum et simplex, to the absolute positing of the res, which once again disperses itself into a boundless variety. This is the path of the pure equivocity of being. With profound insight, Thomas therefore says: "Aequivocum enim dividitur secundum *res significatas*." Now, we see that pure equivocity is at bottom the same thing as pure univocity; for from the perspective of the absolutized res, there is no longer any ground that one can see for the diversity of beings, since it designates only the flip side of pseudo-subsisting being, which is no longer, itself, able to allow any divisio. The exinanitio is negated a priori!

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[6] 1 *Sent.* 22.1.3.2.

Isolating the non subsistens in itself thus means at the same time taking the completum et simplex out of its crisis, or, in other words, absolutizing the uncaused aspect of being as being. In this case, the fissure of the movement of finitization falls away, and being can henceforward distribute itself only according to various differences. Thus we can say: *Univocum vero dividitur secundum diversas differentias.*

By contrast, analogy remains true [*steht im Lot*] to being as being, precisely in its convertibility with the "nothing," and what this means is therefore that the analogum *dividitur secundum diversos modos*, insofar as the modi of being allow interpretation only according to the enactment of the movement of finitization. Therefore, since Thomas sees precisely that, while both pure equivocity and pure univocity miss being in the crisis, and the analogy of being hits the center of the crisis's superessentiality, he says, "And this mode of community (what is meant here is the modus of analogy) is a *median* between pure equivocity and simple univocity."[7] Only now are we able to understand what is meant by the phrase "medium of analogy," and the task that is thereby given to thinking: the convertibility of being and "nothing" as the speculative "beginning" of the explication of participation in being.

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[7] *ST* 1.13.5; cf. *Met.* 5.8.879 and *De princip. nat.* 15.6.

5. Univocal Predication and Essentialized Being

After we have unfolded analogy out of being's movement into subsistence, it is worthwhile to explore it according to the sublation of the ontological difference in God. More specifically, it is only too easy to fall into the danger of isolating the crisis of being in ideality as a thing in itself and then to interpret it "upward" in God and "downward" in the dimension of the finite as finite. But this way of thinking presupposes the contradiction. We must therefore keep the origin and destination of the path present to ourselves insofar as we open ourselves in listening obedience to the necessary sense of being. For we invariably experience that we cannot speak of the analogy of being without mentioning God, since the analogy also unveiled being to us as "pure mediation." We must keep all of this in mind so that we do not in the end get ourselves stuck in a false immanence.

Let us go further in the interpretation!

"It is not possible to say something in a univocal way about both God and the creature. The reason for this is that, *because there are two things to be considered in any given thing—namely, the nature or quiddity of the thing and its esse*—it is necessary that in everything that is univocal there be community according to the ratio of nature, and not according to esse, because there is no single esse except in a single thing; thus, the habitus of humanity does not exist in two human beings according to the same esse. It follows that any time the form signified by the name is ipsum esse, it cannot be used in a univocal way because the thing itself is not predicated in a univocal way."[8]

Here, the question concerning the univocity of God and creation is brought back to the real distinction between being and essence.

"There is nothing that can be said univocally about God and creatures," says Thomas, and he continues, "The reason for this is to be found in the fact that," and here he mentions the principles of esse and essentia. This sequence is important if the question concerning univocity is posed in the context in which we have carried out being's movement of finitization into the dimension of being's mediation into subsistence "through" the essence. We are able to unveil the error of univocal predication, which concerns God and creation, on the basis of the real distinction of the principles, which the movement of finitization illuminated as their basic form.

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[8] 1 *Sent.* 35.1.4; cf. *De pot.* 7.7.

But something else becomes clear here. The real distinction between being and essence is posited as the reason for the fact that in all univocitas we find a "communitas secundum rationem *naturae*," which comes to expression in the phrase *quia cum in re . . . oportet quod*. This is extremely significant for the illumination of analogy and assures us of the proper way.

It is worthwhile reflecting on *why* it is that in all univocitas the *communitas secundum rationem naturae* holds sway. This is not so difficult to ascertain after everything that we worked out above concerning the univocum. The absolutizing of the univocitas unveiled itself, indeed, as the fixing of the esse completum et simplex over against (!) its nonsubsistence. This speculative process, however, is only the flip side of the isolation of the posited *natura*, which has forgotten its procession from being. The hypostasizing of being implied that God makes himself necessary in being as his highest likeness; that is, he pours himself out into the creatum and acquires his living actuality in the ontological difference. This speculative a priori is now precisely the condition of possibility for the univocal predication ascribed to both God and the creature. The infinite and the finite come into accord in the ontological vacillation, in an "essentiell dimension," because the essence, which is posited as really distinct from being, as the dimension of its subservient transnihilation in the substantializing of being as being, is already presupposed. But insofar as being mediates itself to itself "out" of the dimension of the vacillation, it has turned into the absolute *essentia communis*. The indifferent realm of being as such includes God and the creatum in itself and thus establishes the ground for the single self-mediation of both the absolute and the finite. But if we properly grasp being's superessentiality in speculation, if being carries out its transnihilation, from which the positively subsisting res proceeds, then we would have to say with Thomas that the communitas presents itself in the "univocis: secundum rationem naturae . . . *because there is no single esse, except in a single thing*." The concrete reality, however, is now negated by the ontological vacillation, while being itself is "nature-ified" in ideality!

But if we turn our regard to being, if this is the *forma significata per nomen*, then we aim precisely at its superessentiality, at the convertibility of being and "nothing." Here we uncover the speculative root of analogy, which eliminates the univocal predication of being in relation to God and creature.

Because being is infinite simplicity in perfection, then reason, insofar as it has being in view as infinite actuality and the likeness of God, is constantly led astray to speak of being as "pure mediation" in the sense of the univocum. Thomas, however, says, "Et ideo quando forma significata per nomen est *ipsum esse, non potest univoce convenire, propter quod etiam ens non univoce praedicatur*." But how the ens can condemn itself to univocity is something we have attempted to show in the previous section, in light of the separation of being and nonbeing.

6. The Analogy of Being: The *Descensio* and *Imitatio* of Being

We return once again to the origin of the unfolding, for it is only from this perspective that we can arrive at the correct path. We have experienced where we end up when we essentialize being. This essentializing banishes thinking into an all-devouring univocity. But this problem comes to light also on another ground.

"The creator and creature are reduced to one, not by a community of univocation, but a community of analogy. This is of two kinds. Either it arises from this that things share in something in greater or lesser degrees, as potency and act—and substance and accident—share the notion of being. Or it arises from this that one thing receives its being and definition from another, and such is the analogy of creature to creator: the creature exists only to the degree that *it descends from the primary being*, and it is called being only because it imitates the first being."[9]

Here, analogy is interpreted in the creature's descent from the origin, and it is said that the creature participates in being according to this descensio. It is easy to see in this context that what Thomas says stands out against the background of being's movement of finitization. The descent that occurs in this movement is specifically that of the creature, and not that of being, or else this would make "to be" into an existing thing.

Thus, when we said that the necessary sense of being ordered being into finitude, what we meant was precisely the creature's descent from God.

There is no analogy of being in being's ideal vacillation; analogy occurs only through the entity's descent. This descent is meant not in the sense of an extension of being as it pours forth from God into the entity, so that the furthest extreme of this emanation would also always determine the degree of the *descensio*. The being that proceeds from God has always already affirmed itself in the positive reality, because the crisis—that is, the transnihilation of being—does not occur next to God. If we fail to see this, then our predicating being of God and of the creature would necessarily fall prey to univocity.

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[9] 1 *Sent*. Prol. 1.2.2.

The creature participates in being according to its descent from the origin. If the entity's descent were negated, then the creature would be always already posited in an absolute identity with God and the crisis of being would be eliminated. *Descensus* therefore never means "descensus of being," which is why we have constantly pointed out how dangerous it would be to say that being empties "itself"! If being emptied its "self," being as being would first have to be gathered into itself, in order, "subsequently," to be able to carry out the kenosis. In this case, God would be posited as ens qua ens. The communitas would then no longer be able to be determined thus: "Quod unum *esse et rationem ab altero recipit*." The reception of being already means participating in an absolute originating ground [*Urground*] "through" the abyss [*Ab-grund*] of being. The analogy of the creature to the creator is enacted within this context.

In accordance with the text cited above, analogy comes into play in a twofold way. The participation in being occurs according to the entity's descent from its origin. The entity's descent is rooted in being's self-finitizing. This in turn stands within the pull of transnihilation and leads the entity in the same movement of self-finitization back to God. Therefore the text says: "Nec nominatur ens nisi inquantum ens primum imitatur." The kenosis of being into the concrete subsistence is sealed in the imitatio of the *uncaused* origin, insofar as the caused being bears within itself the image of the origin. It is the transnihilation of being as being in the crisis that brings the entity back into the origin: "Now, as shown above it is through being itself that every created substance is likened to God."[10]

Let us never forget that it is only the positivity of the subsisting being itself that brings the likeness of divine goodness "into" the exinanitio, and indeed it does so not against being as being, but rather "through" the being that is open in listening obedience to its necessary sense.

The formulations "being and 'nothing' are interchangeable" and "being has to finitize itself" can easily lead us to set the ipsum esse *against* the positivity of the absolute, in order thereby to legitimate the nonsubsistence. Such a speculative a priori would have to end up finding in the finite, created reality something that did not come from God, which would necessarily negate God's infinite *liberalitas* in the communication of being. But this is not the way things are! The entity's descent from the origin can occur only if the entity itself conforms to this origin in its return to it. Therefore what comes to expression in the sentence *nisi inquantum ens primum imitatur* is the fact that the finite essence in its descent from the origin, despite the transnihilation of being, does not have the "blank nothing" behind itself and therefore does *not suffice* unto itself in a radical way in its subsistence. It becomes clear here that the entity's descent has been carried out in *correspondence* to the "crisis of being," indeed, that it has arisen from the self-finitizing of being as being and thus has been entirely entrusted to the origin in its conformity to it.

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[10] *SCG* 2.53.

This is what makes the analogy of being possible!

Let us recall, in this context, what we worked out concerning the relationship between "participation and causality" in the course of our reflections. If the creature did not descend from the origin—that is, if being's self-finitizing were not sealed in the concretely posited substance, so that the uncaused character of being as being were revealed in it—then the analogy of being would be impossible. All being would be caused, and being, in its contradiction "next" to God, would be made into the generating ground of all beings, including God. Being as "pure mediation" in ideality would in this case unveil itself as the absolute cause, which would hold sway as the absolutized *bonitas divina* that is identified with God's ideality. But how should the condition of the possibility of the analogy of being be discovered here insofar as this has its ground precisely in the convertibility of being and "nothing" and thus can be made accessible only on the basis of being's superessentiality?

7. The Indeterminate *Excessus* of the Infinite over the Finite and the Analogy of Being

The analogy of being stands and falls with being's movement of finitization. If we unduly emphasize the *completum et simplex* and deduce being's mediation to subsistence from this rationalistically determined fixum, then we turn the excessus of the infinite over the finite into a determinate quantity.

If being's movement into subsistence is thoroughly conceptualized by finite reason in reflection, and thus being as being with its concrete subsistence is absorbed into the absolute dialectic, then there is no apparent reason why reason should not be able to determine God's *maior dissimilitudo* with respect to the creature. In this case, finite reason has taken control of even God's infinite self-communication.

But because of his profound understanding of the "crisis of being," Thomas says: "The excess of the infinite over the finite is not a determinate quantity."[11] God can be defined only if reason co-enacts the infinite self-communication of the absolute from the "place of contradiction," in which even God is included, and interprets the undergoing of the crisis of being as the "divine birth" ["*Gottesgeburt*"] of absolute "subjectivity."

At the same time, there is a correspondence between the becoming explicit of the quiddities in the divine intellect and this coming to rest in the contradiction. Because the quiddities in God are God's essence itself, then this emergence of the possibilia in God's ideality implies at the same time that the essentia divina creatrix so to speak extends beyond God into his "other." Thus the reason that has come to rest in the hypostasis of being has pushed its emancipation to such an extent that it is, as it were, able to abstract God's essence from his esse, in order to achieve the absolute definition of God by combining the divine nature with God's esse. But Thomas says, "It must be said that God cannot be defined. For everything that is defined is comprehended by the intellect of him who defines it. But God is not able to be comprehended by the intellect; hence, even though it is said that God is pure act, this is *not* his definition."[12] "And thus the definition of substance cannot be applied to God, *whose quiddity is not distinct from his esse*."[13]

Therefore, because the infinite's excessus beyond the finite is not determined, it follows that the movement into subsistence also cannot be projected into God, and God cannot be degraded into an absolute *Ens*: "*Deus … est supra omnem substantiam*."[14] The determination of the excessus, which finite reason presumes to accomplish, also annihilates analogy along with the convertibility of being and "nothing." What is significant here is the intrinsic connection between the analogy of being and God's excessus beyond the creature through esse as "pure mediation." "Pure mediation" can never be determined as the speculative hinge [*Umschlagplatz*] that allows the mediation of the finite into the infinite. It is not the "metaphysical link" that connects the absolute with the finite.

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[11] 4 *Sent.* 49.2.1.6.

[12] *De pot.* 7.3.5.

[13] *De pot.* 7.3.4.

[14] *De pot.* 7.3.4.

8. Being and the *Analogia Proportionalitatis*

We wish to deepen the connection between the analogy of being and the infinite's excessus beyond the finite with the following text: "A thing is said to be proportionate to another in two ways. In one way, a proportion is noted between the two things. For example, we say that four is proportioned to two since its proportion to two is double. In the second way, they are proportioned as by a proportionality. For example, we say that six and eight are proportionate because, just as six is the double of three, so eight is the double of four; for proportionality is a similarity of proportions. Now, since in every proportion a relation is noted between those things that are said to be proportioned because of some definite excess of one over the other, it is impossible for any infinite to be proportionate to a finite by way of proportion."[15]

We saw that the infinite's excessus beyond the finite is determined by reason the moment being ascends into pseudo-subsistence and God is forcibly swallowed up into the inexorable process of the movement of finitization. But this process never reaches its "goal." The determinate excessus of the infinite over the finite is thus the infinite's self-determination through the finite in the sense of the elevation of the finite into the infinite. By contrast, to say that it is not possible to determine the excessus is simply to say that being itself, as the likeness of divine goodness, does not subsist.

The excessus determinatus unfolds itself even further in relation to the analogia proportionis between the infinite and the finite. But here something even more profound opens up!

The ontological vacillation always implied the radicalized positing of the unmediated reality, which refused the fissure that passes through being's transnihilation, that is, its kenosis. In the same way, God too was robbed of all necessity in this speculative aberration, insofar as the bonitas divina was driven back into the essentia divina by being logicized, and it fragmented in the space of the divine intellect into the infinite variety of possibilia. Thus the absolute ideality of the absolutely "necessary" became the absolute "center," to the "left and right" of which what remains leftover is the unmediated in se of the absolute and created res. God and creature are placed on equal footing, speculatively speaking; they are forced into the sphere of substantialized being, which is elevated into an infinite field of reflection. Unmediated reality thus stands over against unmediated reality, and this represents the culmination of metaphysical positivism. The category of "degrees" of being now applies just as much to God as to creatures, and the scope and intensity of this category are something finite reason now has the capacity to determine. The determinate excessus, however, is the criterion for the *habitudo ad invicem*. The analogia proportionalitatis is thereby rendered impossible.

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[15] *De ver.* 2.3.4.

Analogia proportionalitas means that the ratios at the created level are analogous to the ratios in God. There is no coming to agreement here in a third that has been hypostasized into a mediated medium; the only mediating hypostasis would be the vacillation of being. Thus the analogia proportionalitatis is the proper analogy between God and the creature, insofar as it gives expression to the convertibility of being and the "nothing." Because being as being is the likeness of divine goodness, as Thomas says, there is therefore a similitudo proportionum but no *habitudo ad invicem*, insofar as being as being does not subsist. The *habitudo ad invicem* is excluded because of the crisis of being in ideality, which annihilates the determinate excessus of God over the finite. It likewise eliminates any *determinata distantia*,[16] which would be calculated on the basis of a commensurability [*Vergleichsebene*] made possible by the hypostasis of being. For "in those terms predicated according to the first type of analogy [i.e., the analogia proportionis], there must be some definite relation between the things having something in common analogously. Consequently, nothing can be predicated analogously of God and creature according to this type of analogy; for *no creature has such a relation to God that it could determine the divine perfection*."[17]

If the good, however, contains the *ratio perfecti*, then this passage from Aquinas opens up precisely what we unfolded speculatively above. If finite reason mediates to itself the horizon of being's ideality as a space that lies at its disposal for its operations, then it has identified ideality with the good qua existing in the *subsisting* entity, which forms the will's object. But because being thereby comes to possess its essence, "through" which it mediates itself, as something allocated to it by reason in the pseudo-vacillation, then the creature now has a relationship to God that can absolutely comprehend the divine perfection within itself. In other words, the creature is identified with God. Being, in which now both participate as their "pure mediation," even if we were to call it *similitudo*, would eliminate the distance between God and the creature.

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[16] *De ver.* 2.11.

[17] *De ver.* 2.11.

"A likeness that is found because two things share something in common or because one has such a determinate relation to the other that *from one the other can be grasped by the intellect*—such a likeness diminishes distance. A likeness according to an agreement of proportion [i.e., *analogia proportionalitatis*] does not; for such a likeness is also found between things far or little distant."[18]

Here, distance does not play any role, since being does not subsist—that is, it is "nothing," precisely in its absolute simplicity—which is why a wealth of relationships can be predicated analogously of God and creature, without changing anything in the least with respect to the transnihilation of being in the crisis, that is, without eliminating the movement of finitization. "Indeed, there is no greater likeness of proportionality between two to one and six to three than there is between two to one and one hundred to fifty. Consequently, the infinite distance between a creature and God does not take away the likeness mentioned above."[19] The *analogia proportionalitatis* bridges every distance because the necessary sense of being holds sway in it and being's superessentiality is preserved. Through this form of analogy, infinite distance first becomes what it "is," just as, conversely, the distance of the "nothing" in turn "enables" the analogia proportionalitatis. The analogously determined relationships truly express something about God because being, on the basis of its infinite distance from the God who reveals himself in its transnihilation, always already concretely subsists, and being as the likeness of infinite love is truly appropriated to the entity. This gives expression to the fact that the analogy of being unfolds itself out of the depths of being's superessentiality, to which the movement of finitization bears witness.

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[18] *De ver.* 2.11.4.

[19] *De ver.* 2.11.4.

9. The Acts of God and the Analogy of Being

At the end of this path of thinking, we wish once again to direct our attention to God's acts.

Thomas says, "God does not act in either of these two ways: neither univocally, because no univocal term corresponds to him; nor equivocally, since effect and cause correspond in a certain way both in name and in reasoning though according to what is primary and what is secondary (*secundum prius et posterius*). In this sense, God makes us wise by his wisdom, even though our wisdom falls short of the ratio of his wisdom, just as an accident falls short of the ratio of being, according to that which is in substance. It follows that there is a third mode of cause, which acts analogically. Hence it is clear that the divine being produces the being of the creature in an imperfect likeness to itself. And the same divine being is said to be the being of all things, from which all created being flows as from its effective and exemplary cause."[20]

In these sentences, the entire fullness and the ground in which the analogy of being is rooted comes to light in an extraordinarily profound way.

Deus agit univoce means: finite reason is able to hypostasize being in the crisis, to isolate the *esse completum et simplex* in itself and to set it over against its nonsubsistence. Being would be grasped in this case only in its uncaused character as being, suspended in the ideal vacillation and not transcended into the depths of the good, out of which being is finitized.

Deus agit aequivoce, on the other hand, would imply the hypostasizing of being's nonsubsistence. God would create being not as the "first act" of all acts, but would "leap over" being as mediation in the unmediated positing of the positive reality, whereby the divine acts would be radicalized with respect to the will and the gift of being would fragment into infinitely many particular positings. Here, being is annihilated in its absolute simplicity and fullness, in its infinite actuality as likeness of God, and enfeebled into pure helplessness with respect to the essence.

In both aberrations, there is a logicizing of being as love. We fail to see that being can present itself in its being created only because, as being, it does not possess the character of being caused absolutely in itself; otherwise, all being would be caused and would founder in absolute equivocity, and God would disappear in the positing of the res. By contrast, if being were absolutely uncaused, it would eliminate the being-caused character that inheres in the finite entity, and being would be given in a false exemplar causality. We would be able to deduce the univocity of the divine act from this. In reality, however, the uncaused character of being belongs inseparably together with its caused character: by virtue of being's transnihilation through to the subsisting res (!).

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[20] 1 *Sent.* 8.1.2; cf. Part A, chapter VI.2.D, this volume.

Cause and effect are joined together in the archetype [*kommen urbildlich überein*]! We have already discussed this at great length in Part A, chapter I, this volume. The effect nevertheless always falls short of the cause. Let us keep in mind the great temptation that besets us here to see being, which is "the first effect of God," as deficient in an immediate way. Thinking in this case essentializes being rather than, in obedience to the necessary sense of being, speculatively "maintaining" being in the superessential crisis of its convertibility with the "nothing" and unfolding it in the movement of finitization.

The deficiency of being is thus the always positive breakthrough of being itself into the subsisting res. Only if we see this crisis of being can we grasp the condition of possibility of analogy in general.

"God is the first giver of being to all things."[21] Because this communication of being, however, is not carried out in the sense of an extension of being into the entity, the being that is shared is never something that could be crossed over like a "bridge" into God.

To be sure, a certain analogy of attribution between God and the creature comes to light as a result of the communication of being. But this analogy stands under the "judgment" of being's transnihilation. The "bridge" is "nothing." Thus the analogy of attribution is fulfilled in the *analogia proportionalitatis*, in which the relationships in the infinite are able to be determined on the basis of the given finite relationships. The fact that these finite relationships are actually given, however, results from the pull of nonsubsisting being into the concrete subsistence of the entity, so that the infinite distance ("nothing") is precisely the condition of possibility of a speculative reaching out [*Vorgriff*] from these finite givens into the infinite. Once again, the unity of the *analogia attributionis* and the *analogia proportionalitatis* receives light from being's movement of finitization.

The being of the finite, which is brought forth by God, is brought forth

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[21] 1 *Sent.* 8.4.1.sc.2.

in similitudine sui imperfecta and is therefore unable to sustain itself in the ideal vacillation. Thus Thomas continues the phrase cited at the outset with the following words: "The divine Esse is said to be the esse of all things, from which every created esse flows in an effective and exemplary manner."

"Effective," because being never lies outside of God in such a way that it does not transcend, and is not sublated in, the root of the divine act, the bonitas divina. But this never means that being is identified with divine love in the sense that the bonum of the concrete res subsistens would already lie in the ideality of being, or that being as being would not have the archetypal character of its being uncaused as being in itself. That is why the phrase *Esse manat* is rightly said, "since the creature proceeds from God himself as from its exemplary cause, with whom the creature bears a certain likeness *by analogy*."[22]

10. Tasks Entailed in the Unfolding of Being in Analogy

When we unfolded the analogy of being within the pull of the movement of finitization, we had to set being into relief once again as "pure mediation" and determine it specifically as such in order to overcome the temptation that would lead us to make the absolute contradiction the point from which to begin.

We are only too inclined to logicize the crisis of being in ideality, to substantialize it, and not to sound it out in its entire breadth and depth. If we give into this temptation, then the speculative interpretation of the analogy of being would come to grief.

But many unfinished tasks still lie before us! It would open up many profound possibilities if we were to unfold the analogy of being in terms of ontological spatiotemporality, above all in view of the fact that ontological spatiotemporality specifically presents its meaning in ever "higher natures" that always occur as a result of being's movement into subsistence.[23]

After this, it would be worthwhile to inquire into the analogy of being in the relationship between "participation in being and causality," as we investigated it in the section on the "unfolding of being in the moments of reality, ideality, and bonicity."

It would moreover be important to explore how the analogy presents itself in the context of error and how, as analogy, it first enables the formal structures of being's movement of finitization to remain standing even in the speculative aberration. This was brought initially to expression in the "metaphysics as reenactment." We saw that one system cannot be refuted by another, but rather is introduced, by means of the speculative reduction to the measuring ground of thought (to being's movement of finitization), into the great conversation that takes place between thinkers in the dimension of ontological spatiotemporality.

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[22] 1 *Sent.* 3.1.3.

[23] Cf. the speculative unfolding of *SCG* 4.11 that follows.

What seems to us most important is a disclosure—or, better, a reciprocal disclosure—of what one has generally described as the relationship between the analogia fidei and the analogia entis, on the basis of the dimension in which we have sought to present the unity of natural and supernatural revelation (cf. Part A, chaps. IV.5 and VI.1.D, this volume).

If being's movement of finitization "attains" its proper dimension in the exinanitio of the Logos as the ultimate and original condition of its superessentiality, then the incarnation of the Logos is the center and the root of all analogy (cf. Part A, chap. VI.1.D, this volume). In this incarnation, on the one hand, the hypostasis of being is ruptured and the always already abiding [*wesende*] positive reality is gathered into the abyss of the triune God's act of love in the Word made flesh through the Holy Spirit, and on the other hand, the Son's kenosis in obedience liberates being's movement of finitization for thinking. The enactment of being's finitization, which comes to a head in man, is thus recapitulated in Christ, in his obedience to the Father (cf. on this point the unfolding of the various perversions in Part A, chap. IV.5, this volume).

The superessentiality of being calls philosophy to transcend itself into this theological dimension, for it is this dimension that safeguards philosophy's independence to the highest possible degree precisely because it is what opens up the "crisis of being." If philosophy fails to transcend itself in this way, it falls prey to the hypostasizing of being. Philosophy thus ultimately becomes *pseudo-theology*! Because it is only the theological a priori opened by grace—an a priori that has its root in the divine nature that the Father has "not yet" communicated to the Son—that makes possible the substantializing of being, as we showed in Part A, chapter VI.1.D, this a priori expresses itself ontologically as an absolutized incarnational moment in the hypostatic union that the ontological difference makes a thing-of-the-past in the absolute closure of the "fullness of time." It thus becomes something that no longer calls for thinking. It is along just this path that grace comes to coincide with nature, and all thinking proliferates at bottom as pseudo-theology as a result of this prior convergence. If philosophy and theology converge in this way, then all analogy of being is annihilated.

It would be possible to show on the basis of the dimension that comes to light here how the mediation of being through the essence to subsistence becomes manifest in "God's self-mediation" through the finite in Mary, in whom God simultaneously opens the dimension of the obedience of being and the obedience of faith, by virtue of the Son's exinanitio and through the personal faith of this woman. This twofold dimension is the new "essential space" of the Church, who proceeds from the Son in the Holy Spirit and who bears witness to his kenosis until the end of time as the seal of the ruptured vacillation of being. It is this Ecclesia, who as yeast holds open for the people the ontological difference in anticipation of its "resolution." She is able to do so insofar as, in celebrating the *eucharistia* for the salvation she has received in the Word of God, she reveals being itself as the self-emptying likeness of divine love. She herself, however, is constantly beset by the great temptation to close this difference ...

What does "analogy" mean here in the sense of the history of salvation? What analogy holds sway between the history of being and the history of salvation? How does this express itself concretely, for example, in terms of Church history? What does the history of dogma mean from this perspective?

In the present context, all we can do is register these questions, above all with a view to the question what the analogy of error and the "metaphysics as reenactment" could mean for the task of a "self-critique of theology." This task remains to be carried out.

B

Man as *Totum Potestativum*

UNFOLDING THE HUMAN ESSENCE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF BEING'S MOVEMENT OF FINITIZATION

I

A Speculative Unfolding of *De Veritate* 1.1

1. The Path Thought Follows in the Unfolding of the Transcendentals

Being's movement of finitization, the depths of which came to view in the preceding reflections, will stand as the measure for the presentation that follows. Nevertheless, the task before us now is to face the various dangers that lie in wait for the thinker who undertakes this endeavor and to withstand them soberly, while keeping ourselves constantly open in listening obedience to the necessary sense of being.

The endeavor's difficulty consists in the fact that, even as we direct ourselves to what is to come in our journey forward, we nevertheless have to keep turning our gaze back, toward what lies behind us. The contemplative reflection of the speculative "beginning" demands an effort at concentrating on this "center." We may not allow ourselves to grow weary!

The task at this point is to elucidate the transcendentals, as the principles of being, from the perspective of the unity of the movement into subsistence, to interpret them from the perspective of the originary root of their unity and, following the rhythm of this event, to unfold man as totum potestativum. After everything that we have been permitted to see up to now, there is no longer any good reason to claim that the transcendentals have nothing to do with being's movement into subsistence; there is no reason to think that they are simply *modi generaliter consequentes omne ens*, whereas the movement into subsistence describes and interprets being's self-finitization, and so as such in turn has nothing to do with the unfolding of the transcendentals.[1]

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[1] L.-B. Geiger rightly says, "Every philosophical interpretation of participation is thus at bottom a presentiment or expression of the problem of the transcendentals, of the absolutely universal givens of reality. The complexity or the simplicity of the various systems grows or diminishes to the degree that they

We will presuppose everything that has been worked out above with respect to the path thought must take. There is no space to explicate, once again, the individual terms and phrases we have been using, such as "necessary sense of being," "crisis of being," and so forth.

The path of the transcendental unfolding will lead us directly into man's essence. Because we are carrying out the speculative interpretation of the transcendentals from within being's movement of finitization, a new depth of this movement will be unveiled as we reach man's essence, and man will come to light as the "guiding pattern, the measure, and the compass" of being's movement of finitization. It is only in this transcendence into the anthropological dimension that everything we have said up to this point will reveal its full significance, and we will experience how things actually stand with respect to the great trials and temptations of thought. Many of the apparently "anthropologizing" indications of what preceded will lose their anthropological "appearance" and show their onotological face, just as everything in the following that seems to be merely anthropological will be unsealed and opened up, allowing itself to be unfolded on the basis of its ontological root in an "anthropological ontology."

2. Reason in Its "Apprehension" of Being: The Roots of the "First Principles"

We are attempting a speculative interpretation of *De Veritate* 1.1, in which Thomas unfolds the transcendentals. Later on, we will dwell for a moment on this path itself, but at this point we are able to follow it in thought in a straightforward way.

"When investigating the nature of anything, one should make the same kind of analysis as he makes when he reduces a proposition to certain self-evident principles. Otherwise, both types of knowledge will become involved in an infinite regress, and science and our knowledge of things will perish."[2]

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approach more or less explicit consciousness of the terminus that secretly attracts them." *La participation*, 320n1.

[2] *De ver.* 1.1. We are carrying out the reductio on the basis of the "crisis of being," which is the locus of all speculative unfolding. Thinking has always already made a decision concerning its concrete enactment according to the roots it has in this "ontological site." It is the movement of finitization that sets the parameters for the "ontological site." Thus Pierre Rousselot says that "the idea of being is … the 'habitable land' of human intelligence; it is the atmosphere in which human intelligence lives." "Amour spirituel et synthese apperceptive," *Revue de philosophie* 16 (1910): 238–39.

It is thus here that we have a demonstration of the reductio to reason's self-evident first principles, and Thomas says that one has to undertake a reductio to the principles when one investigates "*quid est* unumquodque," "the *what is* of any given thing." On the one hand, this appears at first glance to be a reductio to the so-called order of knowledge (which corresponds to the demonstrabilia), while on the other hand it appears to be a reductio to the so-called order of being, which corresponds to the *quid est unumquodque*. It is only too easy to forget that these two orders concern "the same thing," even if they are not identical.

If we say this, however, we are not claiming that thinking and being must subsequently be identified with each other. The connection between these two orders nevertheless becomes evident when we recall that in which finite reason's thinking ultimately has its home: "The intellect ... has an operation that extends to universal being (*ens in universali*)."[3]

Thomas shows us how profoundly reason has its roots in actuality and possibility. This already becomes evident in the relation reason has to being, which is particular in every case.[4] Thus the divine intellect relates to universal being as the *actus totius entis*, which is why the divine intellect is identical with the divine essence. But this is not the case with angelic spirit, even though the potential ground of angelic reason is always already actualized. As created reason, it nevertheless exists in potentia, and so forth.

The way that the human intellect stands in relation to being in its operation therefore entails an original decision concerning its being actual or its "being-in-possibility" ["*In-Möglichkeit-Sein*"]. We thus come to see that reason stretches forth, from out of the essence, into being in its apprehending [*vernehmend*] and is always already determined in its concrete subsistence on the basis of this stretching forth, even though it is not fully able to take hold of being as being. Finite reason never apprehends being as being without thereby substantializing being beforehand and consigning it to the absolute contradiction! Instead, reason stretches itself forth perceptively into being as being in such a way that, in obedience to its transnihilation, reason is always already in via among the infinite multiplicity of the material world. It cannot come to a standstill in the "crisis of being."

This temptation in the "crisis of being" is in a particular way tasked to man; indeed, it seems to be the case that his essence is nothing other than the undergoing—or, perhaps better, the subsisting focal point—of this crisis. The condition of possibility for the speculative unfolding of man must therefore lie in the movement of finitization itself. This is something we can only indicate at this point!

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[3] *ST* 1.79.2.

[4] *ST* 1.79.2.

It is clear that the apprehension of the entity on the basis of the depths of being is not an undertaking that reason is able to take on without risk, precisely because reason forfeits all essentiell certainties when it enacts being's movement of finitization. It can give itself such certainty only in the positing of the absolute contradiction. But this would simply imply once again the juxtaposition of being next to God and the enactment of the movement into subsistence absolutely on the side of the finite. Reason's stretching out perceptively into being always implies its being awoken into the light of the divine intellect, since being is "nothing." Finite reason lives in this light, because it does not participate in the divine light next to God, any more than it does in being, as something juxtaposed to God. Instead, it participates in the light of being according to the "emanation of its procession from God." We must once again briefly allude to this for the sake of the matter at hand. Our point here is simply to say that there is a "repetition" of the same temptations in this context as those we discussed at greater length earlier.

The light of divine reason can on the one hand be seen as a pure "medium" of divine and human reason, without thereby giving expression to the abyssal poverty [*Not*] of the convertibility of being and "nothing" in ideality. In this case, being is overemphasized in its infinite perfection and simplicity, and this opens the door to a false illuminationism. Pseudo-Augustinianism is always a result of succumbing to this temptation. Being gets substantialized, and finite and infinite spirit commune with each other in this hypostasized light. But if, on the other hand, the communicated light of being, which awakens reason to itself in concrete subsistence, dwindles into a modest add-on to the reason that is always already really posited as *res cogitans* and "placed outside" ["*ausgesetzten*"] as one being among many, then we eliminate being in its infinite simplicity and absolutize reason's kenosis into the world. In this case, it is the factical reality that exclusively determines the act of knowledge. Perceptive reason falls victim to the domination of the discursive understanding. And because it is no longer awakened, in a priori perfection, out of the light of being that aims at its anteriorly perfected subsistence, then sensibility, too, insofar as it remains incomplete a priori, dissolves into a dimension of mere receptivity. This passivity corresponds to the appearance of the things of the world, in which the essential ground of the substance no longer affirms itself and presents itself as mediated to itself. All that reason has left are therefore the equivocally posited res, which reason as ratio must unify in the schematism of the conclusions held together by the concept of being, and subjugate to its power.

We therefore see that the same temptations that we discussed earlier reappear here; for "being belongs to the light"[5] and *ipsa actualitas rei est quoddam lumen ipsius.*[6]

From all this, we see how dangerous it is to relate the order of knowledge and the order of being to each other in terms of a so-called correlation or parallelism; we also see, conversely, into what abyss thinking falls when it identifies itself with being as such in the ideal vacillation. This is something we will have to keep in mind and anticipate [*vorausbedenken*], as we now attempt to explicate why the reductio to the first principles in the *demonstrabilia* and in the investigation of *quid est unumquodque* "*is*" the same thing. In this sameness, the "first principles" have their home.

3. The *Prima Principia in Demonstrabilibus* and the Transcendentals in the Movement of Finitization

Let us first of all reflect on the principle of identity or contradiction! Reason stretches out perceptively toward being but is always already, as embodied anima intellectiva, directed into being-in-the-world [*In-der-Welt-Sein*] insofar as reason subsists concretely. This means in turn that reason's act of apprehension sets out from the crisis of being to enter into the movement of finitization, and it does so within the pull of the identity of being (cf. Part A, chap. III.4 and 5, this volume). Thus what is denied to it as finite reason on the basis of the essence [*Wesen*], even though it is has always "been" ["*gewesen*"] with being (cf. *SCG* 2.83), reason tries to adjudicate to itself by hypostasizing being. Because being belongs to the light, it hopes that such an undertaking might even open its eyes.

But reason cannot mediate being's self-identity to it except by attempting, as "pneumatic reason," to resolve the distress of the crisis and to convey being into subsistence by means of the energy of the will, which has the good in [!] the entity as its object. We saw earlier that the contradiction cannot be isolated as a thing in itself, that instead it draws its sustenance from the pull of the identity of being, which is disclosed in the movement into subsistence. Being's finite identity with itself is nevertheless the ground on which and through which the dimension of the crisis of being is first of all set into relief in reason's speculative foregrasp and can be "brought back" (re-ductio) to its decision in the power of the necessary sense of being, which directs it into concrete subsistence.

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[5] Augustine, *En. in Ps.* 7.19.

[6] *In de Causis* 1.6.

Being as infinite simplicity, which does not subsist, "contradicts" itself in the crisis only to the extent that reason attempts to keep it there, but the contradiction in ideality cannot serve as the means by which being, as the likeness of divine goodness, justifies the fire of absolute love. Love does not have to presuppose "fixed being" in order to manifest itself as such. Nevertheless, one can say that the division of being and nonbeing takes its measure in a certain sense from the circumincession of being and "nothing." As a result of this decisive division, however, *this* entity is not *that* entity, because, prior to all divisio, this and that entity are always already themselves in concrete subsistence, that is, as positive reality. The speculative unfolding of identity and contradiction thus occurs in the interpretation of that "movement," on the basis of which every entity is always already what it is.

These few observations suffice to show unambiguously that the principles of the demonstrabilia and those back to which thinking must lead its inquiry into what every being *is*, are "the same principles," in the sense explained above, because they are all unfolded out of a single basic form [*Grundgestalt*] in reason's act of existence [*Daseinsvollzug*]. The inner schema [*Systematik*] of this unfolding is given by being's movement of finitization.

If reason stretches out perceptively [*vernehmend*] into being, then it is always already opened into being as concretely existing reason. Because this is the case, it follows that being's self-mediation in concrete subsistence necessarily comes to expression in reason's being awakened to itself. What guides this manifestation and in-forms it, however, is the metaphysical "event" of precisely this concrete subsistence on the basis of being's transnihilation: namely, the movement of finitization.[7]

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[7] On the relationship of the first principles to reason, cf. also J. Maritain, *Réflexions sur l'intelligence et sur sa vie propre* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1926), 76–77.

Human reason has this movement of finitization "evidently" ["*offenbar*"] in itself. But it is evident to reason insofar as the movement into subsistence is laid out "discursively" as a speculative movement of interpretation, always already "actually" there a priori in concrete subsistence. Awakened by being, finite spirit draws sustenance from the basic enactment of this movement and unfolds itself on its basis in an abyssal fullness.

This transcendental enactment reveals to us how originally the principles of the *demonstrabilia* and the principles of the investigation into *quid est unumquodque*, the transcendentals, belong together. To be sure, the *ratio discurrens ab uno in aliud* can establish a "principle of contradiction" and a "principle of identity," and "subsequently" observe that this or that concrete proposition offends against one or the other principle. But finite reason, on the basis of being's movement of finitization, has as a matter of habitus "sublated" these principles in itself by reason of its a priori perfection in the sense of always already having been with being. We may never forget that the embodied spirit is both released and opened up into the intelligible content [*die Thematik*] that belongs to it by nature (and that is traced out by the movement of finitization), and at the same time, in its existing [*im Dasein*], carries this intelligible content into concrete subsistence. The embodied spirit's existing, however, is not what first implies the "arrival" or the "departure" of this content in every moment, since the content would in this case become "concretely" determinative only through the act of thinking. It is instead on the basis of the essence that our reason comes to know being "and whatever essentially belongs to a being as such; and upon this knowledge is founded the knowledge of first principles."[8] Thus finite reason does not have control over the principles. If it did, it would mean that reason would be able to objectify, and conceptually master, being's movement of finitization as the theme of its existence. It would then be able to sort the principles into "separate boxes" ["*ausfächern*"] based on the objectifying blueprint. But in this case, reason would be able to close the ontological difference, insofar as it gathers the innermost heart of the bonum into its reflection and, as pneumatic reason, incorporates the ideality and reality of being into the "absolute concept" of its self-exhibition.

A big mistake! Just as the movement of finitization can be successfully undergone only in essential obedience to the necessary sense of being, so too reason illuminates [*lichtet*] the principles solely in the acceptance of and obedience to the kenosis of being as love. But because reason, as ratio, always already finds itself in via among the variety and multiplicity of its being-in-the-world, something like a "principle of contradiction" or "principle of identity" can thus be formulated out of the depth in which all the principles of rational discourse have their roots. This formulation, however, does not occur in the sense of an extrinsic description of a hypostasized connection between the principles, in the ideality of being, which reason acquires in a simple apprehension. Indeed, the path that reason as ratio follows in the sequence of things, one after another, is not a super-added enactment of existence performed by a reason that hovers suspended in the pure light of being! But it belongs to the most profound depth of human reason that it goes absolutely astray the moment it fails to open itself in obedience to the necessary sense of being in its superessentiality—that is, to God's outpouring love that comes to light "in" being—so that it may arrive at its actual completion from this single root alone, regardless of how brilliantly it uses the original principles as tools for thinking.

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[8] *SCG* 2.83.

It is not difficult to see that the principle of contradiction has its ground in the principle of identity, and vice versa, because in fact even the "contradiction of being" is intelligible in the crisis on the basis of being's identity with itself, even though the speculative "beginning" has its ground in the crisis of being, which cannot be circumvented. It is only a thinking that has lost itself in the ontological vacillation that "begins" with the absolute contradiction and then derives identity from this.

It is evident that the principles in both the order of being and the order of knowledge result from the "same" movement of finitization.

If being had no movement of finitization, then the act of being could never "come into its own identity" ["*er-eignen*"] through the essence in concrete subsistence. There would be no speculative "conclusion" ["*Schluß*"]. To be sure, one does not need to think of "conclusion" here immediately in the sense of a closing of the ontological difference. "Speculative conclusion" means only that being doesn't cling to itself in the crisis, but always already "presences" ["*an-west*"] in concrete, finite subsistence.

But if being is transposed into the vacillation in opposition to its exinanitio by means of the "cunning of reason," then there is no longer any *conclusio* of the ratio discurrens in the dimension of the finite entity, since the factical res is no longer mediated out of the grounding ground of being.

There is also no longer any conclusio of the understanding with respect to thought's transition from the appearance into the essential ground of the entity, because the mediation of the substantial ground in the sense of its self-affirmation in the accidents—that is, in the appearance—is neutralized or even eliminated by the substantializing of being.

By the same token, the speculative uniting of the conclusiones on the basis of the always already enacted "closure" ["*Schluß*"] of being's "movement of finitization," which is rooted in the bonum that can never be recaptured in reflection but instead is lovingly willed, is annulled insofar as the finite spirit is no longer ordered to the "outside" in its striving and closes the metaphysical circulus of its act *in itself.*

But if reason has already enacted this nonreflectively recapturable closure of the ontological difference by substantializing being in ideality, then it no longer comes to any rest and has to keep running along in infinitum, since it has rejected a priori thought's passage to the subsisting res. In this case, there is no longer any investigation of the essential and existential ground of the entity, because the movement into subsistence out of being's transnihilation has not been carried out. Reason is frustrated even in its process of demonstration in the order of knowledge, because the contradiction has been posited in an absolute sense and all identity in the sense of a reductio to the "same" is swallowed up in it and comes to naught in itself. Thus Thomas can say, "Otherwise, both types of knowledge will become involved in an infinite regress, and science and our knowledge of things will perish." The running in circles in endless progress thus has its ultimate ground in the fact that the bonum is dissolved and volatilized in the ideality of being, which means it has been transposed into the dimension of the "ontological yet-to-come" (cf. Part A, chap. VII, this volume). In this future, all thinking is wrested from itself and forced into the endless process, without ever being able to come to a rest in being. The movement into subsistence does not come to a decision in the innermost heart of the good. All necessity lies in "pneumatic reason," which attempts to root ideality in reality by means of absolute reflection and thus takes over the function of the bonum in a pseudo-form, even though it is precisely the self-sameness of being in the positive reality and, transcending this, in the moment of bonicity, at which the necessity of being aims.

We saw earlier that the proposition "being and 'nothing' are interchangeable with each other" has its ground in the truth that there is nothing external to being apart from nonbeing. If reason therefore stretches itself out perceptively into the crisis of being, then it always already stands within the pull of the absolute positivity of being itself, which means it reveals this speculative stretching out into being only in concrete subsistence! Although reason comes to know being on the basis of the essence, it cannot place itself in its concrete subsistence next to its always already speculatively actualized foregrasp out toward being, even though it is enacted in its concrete subsistence precisely on the basis of the actualized content of this foregrasp! The most original principle, which reason nevertheless unfolds in this enactment, is necessarily that in which being's primal division [*das Seins-ur-teil*]—that is, the convertibility of being and "nothing"—comes to decision and the positivity of being comes to light.[9] Therefore Thomas says: "For that which, before aught else, falls under apprehension, is 'being,' the notion of which is included in all things whatsoever a man apprehends. Wherefore the first indemonstrable principle is that '*the same thing cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time*,' which is *based on the notion of 'being' and 'not-being': and on this principle all others are based*."[10] The rooting of the principles in the enactment of the self-exhibition of being's positivity, however, occurs in the speculative interpretation of the movement of finitization. But this fundamental occurrence, which is opened up by reason, never comes to lie "next" to God; if it did, it would mean that the identity, circumscribed within the parameters of participation, is a trait [*Zug*] "in" being itself, and that being is not grasped by this trait, but rather the "beginning" of this metaphysical "pull" [*Durchzug*] of identity is a "dimension of being" that does not (!) belong in this trait. If being were to reach its "goal" in the concrete entity in precisely this constellation, it would remain forever enclosed and imprisoned within the res. The identity would have its beginning, and thus its speculative foundation, in contradiction. But the identity is never simply enclosed within the participation in being, because being is "pure mediation." We thus already saw earlier that difference itself is a being, and has to be thought of as always already actual in God. God's absolute self-enactment thus "trans-nihilates" the contradiction that finite reason all too willingly attempts to posit in the speculative foregrasp toward being as being. Identity does not come to lie inside being's difference from the entity, but rather it sustains the difference and makes it possible. Identity thus does not allow itself to be constituted in the factical immanence of the entity, nor is it determined by speculative reason in the breakthrough of the factical res into its ground. The identity of being is rather the power by which a decision has always already been made concerning the "otherness" of being (difference), and indeed in such a way that this "otherness" does not lie "next" to being, but is rather revealed by the open difference as an otherness that springs from being, in which the positivity of being itself breaks through [*zur Durchbruch kommt*]. The connection that the *prima principia in demonstrabilibus* have with the transcendentals has its ground precisely here. But at this point we stand only at the beginning and all of this will have to be unfolded more profoundly!

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[9] Cf. Geiger, *La participation*, 334: "The first principles are not so much judgments concerning reality as they are the expression of the necessary structure of every judgment, of the fact that there is a judgment."

[10] *ST* 1–2.94.2.

If finite reason is opened up into being as being in such a way that it is directed "by" being to the concrete entity, then it has come to know in a priori perfection all the principles *simplici intuitu* and *sine discursu*.[11] This simple intuition, however, is at the same time unfolded out of reason's having been sent, metaphysically, into the finite path, and therefore separated out in the discursus.

Reason lives and constitutes itself in the unfolding of the movement of finitization. Let us keep in mind that the transcendentals, by means of which reason investigates what each being is, are known as principles in the simple intuition! To be sure, we now have to dwell once again on the phases of the movement of finitization in the speculative unfolding of the transcendentals and discuss them one after the other. However, it is crucial here to be seriously mindful of the fact that the speculative movement is always already sublated ... in the positivity of the subsisting entity. The simple intuition does not refer to being in its crisis; instead, it is sealed in the unifying ground of the concrete substance that came into its own [*ereigneten*] on the basis of being.

The unfolding of the principles of the demonstrabilia and the unfolding of the transcendentals therefore occur, as Thomas says, *eodem modo*: "There are certain conceptions that are known to all people, which inhere naturally in our intellects, such as the notion of being, of unity, of goodness, and the like; the intellect proceeds *in the same way* from these conceptions to its knowledge of the quiddity of any given thing as it does when it proceeds from self-evident principles to the conclusions it seeks to know."[12]

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[11] *De ver.* 8.15.

[12] *Quodl.* 8.2.2.

Because the crisis of being toward concrete substance comes to pass in the movement of finitization, the positivity of the same comes to expression in the *conceptio* of being in the negation of being's nonsubsistence (in the crisis) and the sublation of being as being in the positively subsisting res on the basis of being's self-mediation through the nonbeing of potency. Being, however, does not exclude the nonbeing that is enclosed within it! Likewise, the divisio of being and nonbeing is not to be understood in the sense that the nonsubsistence of being in the crisis is transformed into the relative nonbeing of the potency of the concrete entity on the "path" toward subsistence in finitude. The sentence *quod non est simul affirmare et negare* does not arise from the negation of the "nothing" (non subsistens) of being in its crisis! There is no "path" for this divisio, and yet the positivity of being is nevertheless able to be determined only if we follow the speculative path of the negation of the nonsubsistence in being's self-mediation through the essence. Here, too, we see once again in what depths the first of all principles has its home.

Just as being itself affirms itself in the carrying out of the crisis of being and sets itself up in concrete subsistence, in which act all the principles of reason are grounded, so too must the inner necessity of all principles be derived from the original necessity of the sense of being (as the initiating power of the movement of finitization). Thus Thomas says: "the fact that created things have a particular nature and, in this nature, a determined act of existence, makes these things distinct from their negations; and upon this distinction is based the principle that affirmation and negation cannot be true simultaneously."[13] Therefore, as we will see later on, the analogy of being is the greatest nonsense for "absolute logic," insofar as it is only the "logic" that encroaches on the bonicity of being by means of absolute, linear reflection that can say: "being is; nonbeing is not." It is in this case impossible to understand the sublation of non-ens in ens on the basis of the bonum and in this sense to unfold the divisio of ens and non-ens. This is also the perspective from which to understand the "quod affirmatio et negation non sunt simul vera," about which Thomas speaks: "And on this principle, the necessity of all other principles is founded."[14]

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[13] *De ver.* 5.2.7.

[14] *De ver.* 5.2.7; cf. *SCG* 2.83.

4. Demonstrating an Indemonstrabile?

Now, one could immediately respond to what we are describing by asking: Doesn't Thomas in fact say, "the first *indemonstrable* principle is that 'the same thing cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time,' which is based on the notion of 'being' and 'not-being'?"[15] But haven't we proceeded in our explanations as if this primum principium indemonstrabile were a demonstrabile? Haven't we repeatedly deduced the ground and the root, on the basis of which it is precisely impossible at the same time to affirm something and to deny it?

If one were to raise these questions, it would simply indicate that our exposition has been entirely misunderstood. If the first principle were a demonstrabile, then reason could transpose itself into the "middle" of the self-exchange of being and "nothing," in order from this position to overcome the absolute contradiction, whereby it would determine the *non est simul affirmare et negare*. But if it is true that the ground of the division of ens and non-ens is the necessary sense of being, then reason can never demonstrate the first principle in the sense of distilling the principle in its entire compass from within the pull of an extension of being to the entity. We have already overcome this temptation. On the path we have been following, therefore, the first principle is not demonstrated, but it is displayed and brought to light in the pursuit of the crisis of being into the movement of finitization. This enactment is not an inference from an absolute premise, which goes by the name of "contradiction," the "inference" from which would then be being's identity with itself!

The fact that reason comes to know the first principles on the basis of the essence does not mean that it unfolds these in the ideality of being as being and figures them out. If it did, it would negate the exinanitio of being.

Later, once we have unfolded matter out of just this transnihilation of being, we will understand why Thomas says, "there necessarily are some things in our intellect which it knows naturally, namely, first principles—*even though* in us this knowledge is not caused *unless we receive something through our senses*."[16] The unfolding of the first principles is therefore not caught in a dimension of ideality that is constituted for itself, but instead it is possible solely in the radical enactment of being's movement of finitization, which is ultimately sealed in the procession of sensibility out of the reason that apprehends being. The human spirit always already begins in the other of itself, whereby it brings to expression the fact that the "to be" as an act belonging to the entity "results from the principles of the essence"[17] and precisely therein bears witness to its superessentiality. The "extremities" of the senses thus correspond in the existence of the embodied spirit in a most profound way to the unifying ground of the first principles, which allow themselves to be unfolded out of the "extremities" of the crisis of being.

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[15] *ST* 1–2.94.2.

[16] *De ver.* 8.15.

5. The Movement into Subsistence as the Condition of Possibility of the Unfolding of the Transcendentals

A. The Reception of Being and the Ontological Moments of Reality, Ideality, and Bonicity

Let us enter further into the text of *De Veritate* 1.1!

"Now ... that which the intellect first conceives as, in a way, the most evident, and to which it reduces all its concepts, is being (*ens*). Consequently, all the other conceptions of the intellect are had by additions to being. But nothing can be added to being as though it were something not included in being—in the way that a difference is added to a genus or an accident to a subject—for every reality is essentially a being."

Thomas says that reason, as it were, originally "receives" being as that which is most known. Does this not point precisely to the opposite of what we claimed above, namely, that it is impossible for reason to receive being as being? "With us only those things subsist which are composite"[18]—is this what is meant by *intellectus concipit ens*?

Here, we need to make a precise distinction! The apprehension of being cannot be connected simply with the positive res, or with being in the moment of the always already given positive reality. The *conceptio entis* also cannot be connected with being as being in ideality, for this would be being in the univocal sense of the absolutized *completum et simplex*, the highest sublimation of all finite entities! The conceptio therefore concerns neither univocal being in the vacillation nor the equivocal being that "appears" in the fragmented reality. We may therefore speculatively interpret the *conceptio entis* only as the apprehension of being in analogy, as the reception of being in the sense of an apprehension of the always already posited material entity ... on the basis of the crisis of being. "The first object of our intellect, in this state of life, is not every being and everything true, but 'being' and 'true,' as considered in material things."[19]

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[17] *Met.* 4.2.556 and 558.

[18] *ST* 1.3.3.1.

Reason's vision stands always already in the judgment of the corporeal nature of the subsisting res, insofar as reason's speculative view can never hold being fast, "prior" to its transnihilation.[20]

But if we are to assume the possibility of a speculative reception of being in the *essentiell* judgment of its transnihilation, then finite reason, taken by itself, would have to be in a certain sense the darkness of potency, just as eyes that are shut see darkness and then out of the darkness open themselves in vision to the wealth of the appearance of the beings that give themselves to man. This darkness as an openness that awaits being as being is nevertheless nothing other than reason's potency "to become all things." Thus, if finite reason apprehends the entity that exists concretely and materially, then this entity is never given in a closed particularity but points in the light of being to the omnia of the opened world. Because reason, awakened by the light of being, stretches out to all things, it has always already transcended the entity into being, on the basis of which it is originally empowered to be open "to all things." "Now, the intellect regards its object under the common ratio of being: since *the passive intellect is that 'in which all are in potentiality.'*"[21] Here, an important decision is made. If we say that reason apprehends the *ens*, then what is meant by this is, on the one hand, not only what we have characterized as the positive reality, that is, the always already posited unity of being and essence. On the other hand, it is also not simply being, isolated in ideality for its own sake. Rather, the statement points to the *ens* that is always already opened up in the ontological difference—that is, being "in" the movement into subsistence.

But what does it mean to speak of being "in" the movement into subsistence? It would seem that this being is something reason would be utterly unable to receive, since being "as yet does not" subsist; conversely, insofar as it does subsist, then it is always already the positively finite entity! But Aquinas does indeed claim that the intellect conceives being (ens). If he does not thereby intend this or that particular entity, but rather being itself, how does reason apprehend being? To respond to this question sets the circulus vitiosus in motion all over again: "*Is*" this being being in ideality? . . . and so forth.

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[19] *ST* 1.87.3.1.

[20] Cf. *Div. nom.* 2.4: "For nothing falls into the vision of our intellect unless it be some created and finite being, which falls short of uncreated and infinite being in every respect."

[21] *ST* 1.79.7.

We see what speculative dimensions we have to explore in order to find a beginning. The entire dilemma arises from the fact that we are only too willing to essentialize being in order to justify its "falling into the intellect's vision."[22] But if we open ourselves in the proper way to the crisis of being, then we have to say that the *ens* always already exceeds the positive reality. *Ens* means more than *res*, but also more than being in mere ideality, for reason cannot hypostasize being in order then to receive it. Thus *ens*, if it is placed speculatively in the crisis, once again aims at the positive reality, and we are led to ask: Is the only alternative at this point to see the ens "in" the movement into subsistence itself as a sort of transcendental that has not been, or not yet been, made explicit? It is clear that everything depends here on the speculative interpretation of the bonum, which preserves the crisis of being not only in ideality but also in reality (cf. Part A, chap. VI.4, this volume). The fact that reason apprehends the *ens* can therefore mean only: Reason apprehends the *ens* from the perspective of the ontological difference!

B. Being "in" the Movement into Subsistence: Addition as the Unfolding of Being

Let us go more deeply into the text. Thomas says that reason must resolve all other *conceptiones* back into being itself, for nothing can be external to being apart from nonbeing. Therefore reason has to conceive every "other" as an addition to being. But is it in fact possible for there to be a "conception" that could be added to being? Indeed, isn't everything always already included in being, so that being would simply have to be unpacked in order for the "other" that is implicit in it to come to light as itself? But in this case, wouldn't this explication simply be a work of finite reason, which thus, by its own power, mediates to being the dynamic of its self-exhibition?

No, nothing can be added to being! Everything is included in it. It is not related to what is added to it either as a genus ("potency") to the specifying differentia ("act"), or as a subjectum (pseudo-subsistence) to its accidents (pseudo-essentiell differentiating of being). Being is the ultimate and deepest generative [*auszeugende*] (*formale*) ground in relation to everything that is found in beings—and now Thomas offers a profound justification for why this is so: "Because being is more natural than any nature."

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[22] *Div. nom.* 2.4.

What does this mean?

We saw that the essence, as a posited unitas per seipsam, can easily lead thinking to posit an "other" in juxtaposition to being, which does not proceed from being. The essence is "presupposed," that is, "posited as prior" ["*vorgesetzt*"] to being. This entails the great temptation to say that there is indeed something added to being: the essence determines being, which thus depends on the essence ... and here we have the *extranea natura*! We have already encountered these temptations.

In relation to the present issue, let us summarize our previous findings once again: The "to be" is nothing other, "next" to the essence, just as it is "nothing" next to God, insofar as this "nothing" designates being's nonsubsistence. The pregivenness of the essence in relation to being (as the positing of the essence) always already means: the positing of the entity in positive subsistence. *Therefore nothing can be added to being as an external nature: Quia quaelibet natura essentialiter* (!) *est ens*. Thomas has unveiled the "positive reality" in this profound statement, the reality in which the essence is sublated in being and being in the essence. This sublation results from being's transnihilation. But if we turn our gaze to the positive reality, then it is precisely a radically understood transnihilation of being that leads us to ask: Does this make any superadditum impossible, if it cannot be added as an external nature?

The positive reality itself offers the answer; for it is always disclosed in the dimension of the crisis of being, even though being "results from the principles of the essence." On the basis of the mediating dimension of the bonitas, the positive reality is always already the beginning of ideality, without being determinable in the res on the basis of the essentiell principles in such a way that its ideality would thereby be entirely swallowed up. In its absolute simplicity, being preserves its indeterminacy as fullness. Considered on this basis, therefore, a determination is nevertheless "still" transcendentally possible. But being in the crisis does not allow itself to be determined; it is kept in ideality prior to the determination. Being in ideality, as "indeterminate," does not allow itself to be determined out of its crisis if we conceive the act of determination as the negation of its nonsubsistence. Such an a priori determination would have to conceive of being as "pure potentiality." But this would imply that being has already been conceptualized, that it is included as a conceptus within finite subjectivity, which would thus have the factical res outside of itself and would have to make an effort to achieve the sublation of the res by means of the mediating concretizing of the empty concept of being. But being is always already positively itself as subsisting res and actualizes itself [*vollzieht sich*] out of the difference into the ontological moments of reality, ideality, and bonicity. It has therefore superseded every superadditum, which from our perspective we are able to posit only as a determination of reflection or an *ens rationis*.

This addition as relation to subjectivity, however, does not concern [*betrifft*] being as a self-enclosed res, which would imply that the determination of the transcendentals is only finite reason's determination of "empty being," and thus that the explication would occur exclusively within the sphere of the subject.

The affirmation of the positive res nevertheless results from the crisis of being—that is, from its transnihilation—in the obedience of which reason always already stands by virtue of the essence, since "our intellect *naturally* knows being."[23] Therefore the onto-logical self-achievement of reason is at the same time the achievement of the unfolding of being into the three moments, to which the spirit, as capax entis, has always already opened itself in its powers [*Vermögen*]. Thus the speculative unfolding of the transcendentals is always already co-determined in its depths by the finite spirit's enactment of existence [*Daseinsvollzug*], without the finite spirit being able to determine the crisis of being exclusively by itself and thus in a sense "to construct" ["*aufzusetzen*"] the transcendentals as the self-exhibition of the positive substance's "to be" from its own resources.

But because the person's ontological self-enactment has its condition of possibility in the always already achieved sublation of the ontological difference in God, God's absolute self-enactment also comes to light in the unfolding of the transcendentals. He is revealed along the "path" of being. It is only the hypostasizing of being that would enable the finite subject to determine the transcendentals on its own, but being would in this case at the same time be completely depotentiated and would absolutely refuse to allow man to determine the transcendentals on his own, since in this case the *ens* would be hardened into a fixed substance.

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[23] *SCG* 2.83.

But then how are we supposed to elucidate being—that is, in what way should we interpret its self-exhibition—if something is supposed to be added to it, but added in such a way that we maintain the twofold impossibility of a superadditum, both in pure ideality and in pure reality?

This is possible only on the basis of the superessentiality of being in its enactment of the movement of finitization. In this movement, indeterminacy achieves a determination in which the undetermined is determined in such a way that the determinans—that is, the superadditum—proceeds from it precisely in the positing of the *ens*. In this case, nothing is added to being in the sense of an external nature, for each and every nature is essentially *ens*. Being is always already unfolded prior to every determination in the enactment of the movement of finitization, because it is always already a positively subsisting entity. It is therefore correct to say that nothing can be added to being, if, in saying this, one means its subsistence.

The nothingness of the superadditum, however, remains entirely misunderstood if one has in mind only an isolated reality. In this case, the convertibility of being and "nothing" is hypostasized for its own sake, and the absolute contradiction is elevated into the originating source of being's transcendental self-revelation.

Because the *ens* is always already opened up by finite reason into the ontological difference, insofar as reason enacts itself in this difference, then the *ens* conceived by reason unveils the entire breadth of being's movement of finitization. It is only on this basis that we can understand that there is a superadditum to being, which does not add any nature to being because every nature is essentially *ens* by virtue of being's transnihilation through to the concrete substance; that is, it is always already posited in unity with being and blended with it. But the superadditum is possible by virtue of the entity's being opened into the dimension of the crisis of being, in which being and "nothing" exchange themselves for each other. Being, in its "indeterminacy," enters into the movement into subsistence on the basis of this crisis, and the possibility of a superadditum to being results from this movement, a superadditum that designates "nothing" that would not belong in being in a positively essentiell way, that is, with necessity. Being is a positive entity prior to every determination of being as the determination of something undetermined in the crisis: "In this sense, some predicates may be said to add to being inasmuch as they express a mode of being not expressed by the term 'being.'"

We thus see the powerful dimensions into which the transcendentals unfold and how the original root of such an event has its home in the ontological difference between "to be" and what is, that is, in being's movement of finitization.

Now, it is still necessary to determine being's twofold *modus expressus*. In doing so, we will see how fundamental the configuration [*Gestalt*] of the ontological difference as the structure of participation in being is for the thought of Aquinas. But let us always keep in mind that reason's apprehension of being has its locus in the ontological difference and is thus originally incorporated into the spirit's concrete self-enactment.[24]

c. The Movement of Finitization as the Fundamental Configuration of the *Specialis Modus Entis*

We wish to continue along our path and call to mind once again what keeps us in the pull of the matter at hand: the necessary sense of being. Let us not get impatient with the constant repetition! The regular use of the same phrase can easily cause thought to grow weary in its operation and to allow what is intended to dry up into a formula altogether bereft of sense. But it belongs to the essence of contemplative speculation that, as it progresses in its thoughtful movement, it draws its sustenance from the constant recollection of its origin.

In the present work, it is not possible to present what discloses itself in thoughtful meditation [*Besinnung*] on ratio, and the various paths such a meditation must travel. This may be possible in a later investigation. Here, what concerns us is catching sight of the speculative center of the task that has been laid upon us. But if there is anything that reason [*Vernunft*] has failed to apprehend, then the understanding [*Verstand*] will also be unable to undertake its own work.

After Thomas unfolded the possibility of a superadditum to being, which expresses a modus of being that is not given the name of being, he passes over to the task of determining this modus in a twofold way.

"This happens in two ways. First, the mode expressed is a certain special manner of being; for there are different grades of being according to which we speak when we speak of different levels of existence, and according to these grades different things are classified. Consequently, *substance* does not add a difference to being by signifying some reality added to it, but *substance* simply expresses a special manner of existing, namely, as a being in itself. The same is true of the other classes of existents. Second, some are said to add to being because the mode they express is one that is common, and consequent upon every being."[25]

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[24] Geiger points to this: "In formulating being and its properties, in apperceiving its necessary unity, what we come to see is not so much the objects we study as it is the very nature of all objects, the nature of our knowledge itself." *La participation*, 363.

Now, what is going on with this *specialis modus entis*?

It is no longer difficult to interpret this specialis modus, since it too can be speculatively illuminated on the basis of being's movement of finitization.

The kenosis of being aims at its concrete subsistence. "Ens est quasi esse habens, hoc autem solum est substantia, quae subsistit."[26] But the substance does not add any difference to being, insofar as being mediates itself to itself through the essence and therefore what is revealed in the substance is only a basic form [*Grundgestalt*] of being.

But this specialis modus is not something external or accidental to being. It is instead determined on the basis of the decision of being in its convertibility with the "nothing." The progression of this decision into the movement into subsistence already implies the teleology, the basic outline, on the basis of which the *ens* unfolds its always specialis modus. The basic outline of the movement into subsistence contains within itself all the special modi, in which being exhibits itself according to the various degrees of ontological potency. Earlier, we already attempted to gain insight into the relation between substance and accidents (cf. Part A, chaps. VI.4 and VII.3, this volume).

But the specialis modus entis and the various "degrees of being" can also be interpreted in terms of other dimensions, if we determine the various degrees according to the ever deeper reception of being, which provides the measure for the place a nature holds in the order of being. We will return to this point again later, once we have speculatively unveiled matter as the outermost enabling dimension of being. We will at this point also be able to show the difference between the special modus of being, which, for example, is expressed in the relationship between substance and accidents, and the modus that is interpreted as cosmos, likewise on the basis of the measure of the being that finitizes itself, just as Thomas does it in the famous chapter 11 of the fourth book of the *Summa contra Gentiles*.

[25] *De ver*. 1.1.
[26] *Met*. 12.1.

We will attempt to present being's movement of finitization as the fundamental structure of the cosmos and to interpret man as its internal guiding rule. It is only in this context that the "cosmic" significance of the temptations we have tried to elucidate will become clear to us.

We have already shown the dangers that arise here when the specialis modus of being is absolutized. In a word, they all have their root in the fact that the "locus of the contradiction," the crisis of being in ideality, is taken for its own sake and being's transnihilation through to subsistence is misused as reason's superessential instrumentarium for the penetration of being.

D. The Transcendentals and Being in "Pure Finitude"

As we follow out this thinking, another difficulty now presents itself. We ask: Is it in fact at all possible to unfold the transcendentals as *modi generaliter consequentes omne ens* out of the movement into subsistence, since the movement, as we have seen, aims at the finite entity, while the transcendentals have to be posited both for finite being and for Ipsum Esse Subsistens? Indeed, they have priority over every other name that we use to give expression to God. "The names 'being' and 'goodness,' 'unity' and 'truth,' strictly speaking precede the other divine names according to the order of understanding, which is evident by virtue of their kinship."[27] If this is the case, is it then in fact at all permissible to explicate the transcendentals in terms of being's self-finitization? Wouldn't being have to be unfolded precisely in the character of its being uncaused as being—that is, in the dimension of its being the pure archetypical source—so that the "modi generaliter consequentes *omne* ens" can be determined? Is it not this that would provide the foundation for an unfolding that would allow us to interpret the comprehensive generality, the original depths that provide the measure for everything else?

A question arises here, which we have already repeatedly dealt with and which, though it has been posed differently in every instance, remains at bottom one and the same. It was the question of whether it makes any sense at all to undertake an unfolding of being out of the *movement* into subsistence and to speak of a necessary *sense* [*Sinn*; also, "direction"] of being, since being is always already positively itself in finite subsistence and the movement of finitization is apparently only the subsequent construction of an event that does not affect the positive substance in any way at all.

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[27] 1 *Sent.* 8.1.3.

To be sure, thinking is justified in unfolding being's movement of finitization, but reason proceeds "with certainty" only if it does not pay for the speculative interpretation by negating being's exinanitio. We admit that the *modi generaliter consequentes omne ens* cannot be explicated on the basis of the "movement" into subsistence qua "movement" (!). Thinking has always already rooted itself in the reality of the manifest entity that lies before it. But we go astray if we unfold the transcendentals in relation to a reality that is opened up into mediation only by the act of reason. The transcendentals are always already the self-exhibition of the subsisting being, but they are nevertheless never imprisoned in the dimension of "pure finitude." It is also not possible to object in this context that, though we determine the positing of the finite substance on the basis of the movement into subsistence, the same can never be said with respect to the absolutely subsisting being itself, so that the unfolding of the transcendentals, which we are attempting here, concerns only the finite being that has its meaning in the movement into subsistence, and not God.

We have encountered this reasoning once before. It arose at the beginning as the claim that being cannot be "pure mediation." The argument further claimed that if being and "nothing" are convertible with each other, then the ground for this convertibility cannot lie in the fact that there is nothing external to being other than nonbeing. The objection arose again in the guise of the ambiguity that claimed that finite being is so radically "finite" that the movement into subsistence has to be established "next" to God, in order to avoid having the finite affect the absolutely subsisting Being. The objection that claims that our unfolding of the transcendentals has validity exclusively for "pure finitude" thus has its roots in the aforementioned confusion.

But the movement into subsistence *never* takes place "next to" God. Thus the finite entity, insofar as it is called a being on the basis of being, and the character of being caused is not ascribed to being insofar as it is being, in a certain sense possesses the character of being uncaused in itself, and thus, through its being taken up into the unoriginated character of the origin (cf. Part A, chap. VI.2.D, this volume), it bears witness to the radicality of its being caused. The absolutized enduring reality, by contrast, as a fixum of the understanding, denies the caused character of being and eliminates the speculative sublation of the movement of finitization in God.

There is therefore no unfolding of the transcendentals in "pure finitude" without our always already having the subsistent being itself, God, in mind at the same time. The movement of finitization is not simply negated in God, so that God would have to "set it aside" and "push it away" from himself in order to justify himself in his positivity. In this case, the entire participation in being would be falsely set "next to" God.

But because it presents the original self-unfolding of being, which reveals its innermost self in the transcendentals, the negation of the negation (the movement of finitization!) is always already a revelation of God's absolute positivity (cf. Part A, chap. VI.4, this volume).

It is just as false to posit the absolutely subsistent being as infinite and as-yet-unmediated reality (*in se*) as it is to remove the finite reality from the crisis of being. In both cases, it is the necessary sense of being that is annulled. The transcendentals therefore slide into "pure finitude," they get bound up inside the subsisting res, and the subject portrays them in a subsequent and extrinsic way. The original belonging together of being and man, however, makes the abstract fixing of the unfolding of the transcendentals impossible, both on the side of the entity and on the side of finite subjectivity.

6. Being and Nonbeing in the Movement into Subsistence and the Phases of the Transcendental Explication

The proposition "reason apprehends being" refers to being in the dimension of the movement into subsistence. Being goes beyond the moment of positive reality; it does not evaporate in ideality, and it does not dissolve into a pseudo-bonicity, as object of the will, which would collapse into a never-ending process. *Ens* does not designate only the positive reality, insofar as this receives its light from the positing of the essence, but rather indicates the entire dimension of being's movement of finitization without reason being able to "objectify" it. In this case, reason does not apprehend "to be" in some place beyond the entity.

This is why the explication of the transcendentals has its beginning, for Thomas, in the always already posited reality, even though reality is what it is only on the basis of the crisis of ideality. Thus being in ideality remains in a certain sense the guiding background of the speculative unfolding, which has its ground in the positive reality. Thus Thomas first determines the res, the unum, and the aliquid in the dimension of reality, and then returns in the movement of thought into the difference between ideality and reality. From the perspective of this difference, he interprets the verum, and then con-"cludes" with the bonum, as it were, within the pull of the confluence of being out of reality and ideality into bonicity. One can never separate the ontological moments from one another, however, in order to subsequently determine the corresponding transcendentals in each case within the individually segregated dimensions and thus to place them in distinct categories.

If one were to insist on doing so, one would thereby make manifest that one hasn't the slightest idea what being's movement of finitization means. For this movement has always already left behind itself the "dimensions" of reality and ideality as separable "dimensions" set off against the concrete subsistence of being: being is the positive concrete entity in its three moments of reality, ideality, and bonicity. It would therefore be a mistake, in view of the discussion to come, to claim that the reality, as the field of interpretation for the res, the unum, and the aliquid, could be separated out from the original context and the positive relation of all three ontological moments.

The difficulty of our endeavor consists in the fact that we are striving to set forth the original "one" in a "movement," which we are able to enact only because we dare to hold being speculatively in ideality, in obedience to the necessary sense of being, without neutralizing the convertibility of being and "nothing." But if thinking nevertheless gets stuck in the act of the movement into subsistence, if finite reason fails to open itself to being as love, which has always already mediated itself and affirmed itself in concrete subsistence, if the spirit remains deaf to being's transnihilation, then everything has gone astray.

We therefore see that the dangers we encounter grow greater, and that, even when we apparently have the formally correct formulations, we nevertheless betray a tendency to fall prey to the temptation to misread everything that has to do with being. This danger is intensified still more by the fact that now, in a certain sense for the first time, the "relation" between being and essence comes into play in the presentation, as we will see in a moment.

It is therefore important to point emphatically to the fact that we are able to follow this path only if we think "in listening obedience" ["*hörig*"]. But because *ens* is the first thing to fall into "reason's vision," it is thus necessary to *see* "in listening obedience." Being can be perceived in vision only in obedience to the necessary sense of being, insofar as reason finds the entity present before it as that which being always already is.

The transcendentals must allow themselves to be unfolded as the first principles for the inquiry into what each being is in the ontological moments of reality, ideality, and bonicity. For these moments unveil the original self-enactment of being as what it *is*! We will therefore first attempt to interpret the "dimension" of reality in a transcendental way, though of course this does not mean that we are able to trace the three moments back into being's movement into subsistence (as the path along which they unfold themselves) in order thereby to acquire separate "realms" for interpretation.

Nevertheless, thinking will manage to enter once again into the opened span of the difference between being and beings following the interpretation of reality, and will discover in this difference the proper focal point of the movement of finitization: the essence of man.

Now, we have constantly kept the *ens* in mind. But even the divisio [*Scheidung*] of being and nonbeing reaches the "point of decision" ["*zur Entscheidung*"] in the movement into subsistence. This could lead one easily into the temptation to establish nonbeing as a transcendental and indeed to do so on the basis of the following train of thought: If the transcendentals unfold themselves in being's movement of finitization, then non ens would also have to be a *modus generaliter consequens omne ens*, for it exchanges itself in the crisis for being, it is negated in the movement into subsistence, and it would also have to join with being itself transcendentally. This could happen in such a way that the nonbeing in its speculative determination reveals nothing other than … the positivity of being.

One can speak of a transcendentality of the "nothing" in an entirely determinate sense, insofar as one is referring to the *non subsistens* of being as being in ideality. But we have to keep in mind that being is *non subsistens* precisely as *completum et simplex*. We constantly run into the danger of positing nonbeing "next to" being or to "confuse" it with being. But if one were then to insist that being in the movement into subsistence excluded the nonbeing that it previously included, in the sense that it thereby posited its potency and affirmed itself "in" this potency as its enabling ground, then everything would go astray!

Being as being in its crisis, as the "nothing," is just as little a transcendental as *non subsistens* is a transcendental. To be sure, being has negated the negation of what it is not, which means it has "sublated" it in itself because it always already positively subsists and always already "has been" the movement into subsistence. But one cannot conclude from this that nonbeing is a transcendental, if what one means by this is a "*modus ipsius entis* generaliter consequens omne ens."

It would make sense to speak of the transcendentality of the "nothing" only if what comes into view thereby is the convertibility of being and "nothing" in the crisis of being, on the basis of which the positively existing being is "itself" on the basis of the transnihilation (in the moment of bonicity), *"through" and "with" what it is not*, precisely because nothing is external to being apart from nonbeing! About *this* transcendentality of the "nothing," one can say that there exists a unity of possibility and actuality, which has its roots in the necessity of being. All potentiality, however, is non ens, even though the non subsistens in the crisis of being does *not* designate any potentiality. "If the expression 'non-being' negates not only esse itself in actuality, but also the act or form by which something participates esse, then matter is 'non being.'"[28] "Since nothing can be added to being that does not participate it."[29]

We are thus able to say: The convertibility of being and "nothing" proves to be the condition of possibility of a superadditum to being, in which being unfolds itself, and indeed in an "otherness," in which "nothing" is expressed that does not always already belong essentially in being. But it is important not to affirm being "as such" in abstract identity (A = A), in a manner that closes it off from the "nothing," for the sake of a mediation of the res into the absolute that would pass "over" such an identity. This is what occurred over the course of modern metaphysics, which sought to open up the self-enclosed res (overemphasized transnihilation) into the "creaturely vacillation" (mediated by the ens indifferens) in the direction of the Absolute. In this case, there would be only one possibility left for the unfolding of the transcendentals: it would become merely the differentiation of the *conceptus entis* by means of abstract *intentiones*, which can be carried out only in the isolated "thinking subject." This conceptual hypostasizing would also give expression to what being always already "essentially has-been" … but the *quaelibet natura essentialiter (!) est ens* would be forced into the ontological vacillation and would have annulled the true exinanitio of being!

[28] *De sub. sep.* 8.

[29] *De pot.* 7.3.4.

7. Ens and Res: Explication and Identification in Ideality and Reality

Let us enter more deeply into the text (*De ver.* 1.1): "Some are said to add to being because the mode they express is one that is common, and consequent upon every being. This mode can be taken in two ways: first, in so far as it follows upon every being considered absolutely; second, in so far as it follows upon every being considered in relation to another. In the first, the term is used in two ways, because it expresses something in the being either affirmatively or negatively. We can, however, find nothing that can be predicated of every being affirmatively and, at the same time, absolutely, with the exception of its essence by which the being is said to be. To express this, the term *thing* (*res*) is used; for, according to Avicenna, thing differs from being because being gets its name from to-be, but thing expresses the quiddity or essence of the being."

Ens goes beyond positive reality insofar as it does not exclusively aim at the positing of the essence, but designates precisely the superessential openness of the posited reality to the necessary sense of being. The name *res*, however, is taken from the essence, just as the name "reality" (as a moment of being) designates the always already achieved blending [*Verschmelzung*] and abiding unity of being and essence. It is easy to see from this that the ens extends beyond the res.

However, "nomen rei exprimit *essentiam entis*."

The ens would not be able to go beyond the reality—that is, the positive reality would not open itself to the crisis—if it did not designate the always already posited unity of being and essence and along with it the always already superseded primal division [*Ur-teilung*] of being. The play of being in the three ontological moments would then utterly fail to come to light; for the transnihilation of being—that is, the positing of reality—would not be carried out, and being as being would be dissolved in its superessential dimension!

The following train of thought sheds some light on this: Being does not fall prey to the positing of the essence in its movement into subsistence. The essence is rather posited for the sake of being. Therefore the positing of the essence bears witness to itself in the fact that it does not keep being in the dimension of positing, but that the *ens*, which derives its name from being, transcends the res. The positing of the essence, however, is the positing of the positive reality. Therefore the ens does not get swallowed up in the res.

Now, at this point one could object: If the reality comes to light as the moment of the always already posited unity of the principles (being and essence), then there is no way that the ens is able to go beyond the res. If it were the case that the ens reached out beyond the res, then one would no longer be able to speak about the always already enduring unity of being and essence in the moment of reality.

But this objection fails to see that it is not a contradiction to say, "the ens extends beyond the res" and "being and essence are always already posited in unity in the ontological moment of reality." To the contrary, the two statements imply one another! The positing of the positive reality occurs *as a result of* [*aus*] (!) the transnihilation of being. This is what allowed us to see clearly the always already enduring unity of the principles in the positing of the subsisting res.

The positing of the positive reality, however, does not occur for the sake of being's transnihilation, but rather for the sake of the necessary sense of being, by the power of which being mediates itself to itself—that is, affirms itself as being—in the positing.

Therefore the ens must necessarily transcend the res, precisely because, in the moment of reality, the principles are always already given [*gesetzt*] in unity. If there were no positing of reality, then being could not "mean" ["*meinen*"] itself and bring the crisis to decision! If the ens did not go beyond the res, then there would also not be any positing of the positive reality, insofar as this occurs in fact for the sake of the necessary sense of being, which orders being, "opened" by reason in the speculative foregrasp, into the exinanitio.

In the same way, it now becomes apparent how the ens also "transcends" the verum and the bonum: "Put simply and absolutely, being is prior to everything else.... Everything else is included in a certain sense in being in an undifferentiated unity, as in its origin."[30] Nevertheless, if the movement into subsistence has reached its end—that is, if being is positively "itself" in the subsisting entity—then it means that "according to the supposit ... they are convertible with one another and are the same, nor do they ever leave each other behind in the supposit."[31]

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[30] 1 *Sent.* 8.1.3.

[31] 1 *Sent.* 8.1.3.

In section 6 above, we discussed at length how being, which is the first thing to be apprehended by reason, can be determined from "out" of the phases of the movement into subsistence, which illuminates the successive explication of the transcendentals.

The transcendentals are thus able to be related to each other in a twofold way and so compared to one another: on the one hand, "according to the supposit, in which case the terms are convertible with each other," or on the other hand, "according to their intentions, in which case ens is simply and absolutely prior to the others. This is because ens is included in the understanding of the transcendental terms, while the converse is not true." But because the *ens*, understood in this sense, is grasped always already on the basis of the ontological difference, there is thus in relation to this *prius* of being the speculative *posterius*, without being collapsing into a motus, since, in the fissure running through it toward positive subsistence, it has always already "caught up to" ["überholt"] itself in the correspondence [Übereinkunft] of its transcendental self-exhibition. Nevertheless, we are still able to say: "The first thing that falls into the imagination of the intellect is being, without which the intellect is unable to apprehend anything else."[32]

What has been grasped or apprehended by reason in the speculative "beginning" is not "empty being." The name "empty" in the sense of being's "not yet" being mediated would refer to being's nonsubsistence, while the word "being" would designate its endless simplicity and actuality. The phrase "empty being" is wholly untenable as a speculative attempt to describe the convertibility of being and "nothing," since it does not sharpen the crisis but instead presents it in an undifferentiated way. Being's movement of finitization is never the determination or fulfillment of this "emptiness."

Let us move forward!

If one says *nomen rei exprimit essentiam entis*, then what is grasped and expressed thereby is precisely the positive reality that always already comes to light in the positing of the essence, and at the same time it is decided that the ens cannot be identified with the res: "The name 'thing' is derived from the quiddity only,"[33] "'being' (*ens*) is derived from the act of being"; "the name 'being' is obtained from the esse of the thing."[34] But if we lose sight of being's superessentiality, and if being, as the likeness of the divine goodness, loses its openness in absolute transparency to God's infinite self-communication—that is, if it clings to itself in the pseudo-subsistence—then ens and res get identified.

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[32] 1 *Sent.* 8.1.3.

[33] *Met.* 4.2.

[34] 1 *Sent.* 25.1.4.

This can happen, on the one hand, through the fact that the essence cuts itself off from being in the positing, which means that the positive reality does not "allow" the transition into bonicity out of the pull of being toward subsistence, and the act of being founders in the essence; on the other hand, with respect to the realm [*Raum*] of ideality, it means that the dimension of the possibilia is made gradually independent (cf. on this point also Part A, chap. VIII.1.A, this volume).

Thus we see on the one hand that the essence ceases to be obedient space, through which the speculatively opened being relieves the distress of the crisis. On the other hand, this speculative a priori causes the self-mediation of the Absolute to harden into the infinite, univocal essence. In other words, we fail to understand the speculative unity of the following two propositions: "The being (*esse*) of the thing ... is constituted *by the principles of the essence*"[35] and "Esse is more intimate than any of the things by which a thing is determined (the principles of the essence!), *which is why it remains when they are excluded.*"[36]

But let us now inquire more profoundly into the identification of ens and res in relation to the sublation of the difference of being as being in God.

God creates in affirming himself. Insofar as he wills himself in infinite love and knows his will, he knows at the same time everything that he is able to will. But what God is able to will is radically sublated in the divine intellect in the mode of nonbeing, which means that, in God, it is God himself. Thus, in God's infinite ideality, being and "nothing" exchange themselves for each other in a profoundly mysterious way, and indeed they do so on the basis of the innermost heart of divine goodness, which is the object of God's will. Thomas therefore says, "For all creatures before they existed, were not possible by any created power, since no creature is eternal."[37] Creatures are possible only by virtue of God's absolute power [*Macht*]: "insofar as God was able to produce them in existence."[38] The emergence of the possibilia in a possibile esse in the divine intellect therefore always coincides with the enfeeblement of the Father, insofar as *potentia* is appropriated to him. By the same token, the Logos becomes subject to otherness and is thus not absolutely endowed with the divine nature.

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[35] *Met.* 4.2.11.
[36] 2 *Sent.* 1.1.4.
[37] *ST* 1.9.2.
[38] *ST* 1.9.2.

Once again, we see verified the notion that the only alternative allowed to remain in the end is the negation of this negation, in which God manifests himself as "Spirit" (cf. Part A, chap. IV.5, this volume). The surplus of "inchoative" entities that emerge in God, which are arranged in an order, is precisely not the revelation of the Father's power, but rather designates the gradual dissolution and weakening of that power; Thomas recognized this: "Things do not have any order as they are in God but as they are *in themselves*. Thus the order of things is *not* attributed to His *knowledge* or to His *power* but only to His *will*."[39] But the voluntas is appropriated to the Holy Spirit, so that the "Spirit" as negation of the negation is necessarily borne witness in the speculative aberration, in order to negate the depotentiating of the Father, and thus also of the Son, implied by the separating out of the "entitative" store of possibilities, for the will aims at the res *secundum quod sunt in seipsis*, which is why it makes possible and sustains in a certain sense also being's difference from the concrete self-mediation that occurs in the substance.

This is the path along which the fate of modern metaphysics comes to completion in Hegel. At bottom, thought attempts here to come to terms with the speculative interpretation of being's superessentiality on the basis of its identification with the res and at the same time with the negation of essences in God, that is, with the determination of the "nothing" located in the divine intellect.

Thomas had this truth in view when he said, "Hence it follows *from all this* that when God is said to be *understanding* (*intelligens*) [the locus of ideality!], no kind of multiplicity is attached to His substance."[40] The multiplicity in God is "annulled" by means of the knowledge of the divine intellect itself and sublated in it in the mode of nonbeing: "In this way, therefore, through one intelligible species, which is the *divine essence*, and through one understood intention, which is the *divine Word*, God can understand *many*

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[39] *De ver.* 23.2.3. "Ideas are directed to the existence of things. But singulars have acts of existence more truly than universals do, because the latter subsist only in singulars. Therefore, it is more necessary for singulars to have exemplars [ideas] [!] than it is for universals," *De ver.* 3.8. sc. 2.

[40] *ST* 1.14.4.

things."[41] Thomas does not identify the *species intelligibilis* immediately with the *intentio intellecta*; for the verbum divinum is not simply a mere "concentration" of the divine essence [*eine bloße "Aufgipfelung" des göttlichen Wesens*], but rather the Son subsists as person through the communication of the divine nature by the Father. This personal subsistence would collapse into a mere moment of the divine nature if the Father had not "sublated" the divine essence in personal subsistence and communicated it to the Son. The sublation of the essences in the divine ideality in the mode of nonbeing would in this case coincide with the emergence of the mere "concentration" of the divine essence in the Logos—specifically, into its personal subsistence—so that the Son's a priori posited inseity would be communicated to a "personal difference," which would correspond, "on the side of the finite," in terms of the participation in being, to the sublation of the substance into the subject. This theme seems to us to be determinative in a foundational way for the course of modern thought. But Thomas combines the two passages cited above in an abyssal formulation that designates precisely what we have been attempting to bring to light: "The passage of Augustine in which it is said that God 'sees *nothing outside Himself*' is not to be taken in such a way, as if God saw *nothing outside Himself*, but in the sense that what is outside Himself He does not see except *in Himself*, as above explained."[42] We see in the context of this notion that the sublation of the finite in God in the mode of nonbeing has its speculative a priori in the relation between nature and person. This a priori is revealed as much in God's absolute triune self-mediation as in the personal actualization of the finite spirit, which has its original theme in the ontological difference.

But if the essences are entitatively structured in the divine intellect, then this implies the identification of ens and res.

Because God affirms and infinitely loves his essence, which has now fragmented into the infinitely various possibilia, it follows that God loves these possibilia as his own essence and thus commits himself [*sich entscheidet*] to "pure finitude." If, then, the possibilia come forth from the divine intellect, insofar as the voluntas is now identified in the specific way outlined above with the scientia divina, wherein love becomes a function of consciousness (*in se*) that irrupts into mediated self-consciousness, the possibilia are immediately disposed toward existence [*entitativ disponiert*] in the divine ideality; that is, they have always already been transposed into their entitative state [*ihr Seiendsein*].

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[41] *SCG* 1.53.

[42] *ST* 1.14.5.1.

In just the same way that being, as always already actual in the dimension of the posited reality, is able to be separated from its ideality, so too the possibilia, as always already "possible," are able to close themselves off from the enactment of the positing, that is, from the movement into subsistence. This ultimately means we have nothing other than an entitative spectrum that passes from *possibile*, to *creabile*, to *creatum* (Scotus). Esse in this case comes to mean simply "the ability to exist of an essence that is always already possible in itself."

Here we see how being is erected in a twofold sense entirely on the foundation of the essence: on the one hand in isolated reality, and on the other in the neutralized crisis of ideality. From this perspective, it is no longer difficult to discover the unifying ground of the entire course of modern thought. It becomes clear how the path that starts from Duns Scotus (the explication of the ideality of being and the divine intellect that has become explicit in the spectrum of possibile, creabile, creatum) and Suarez's path (beginning in the moment of reality, which is the always already posited unity of the principles) imply one another and unfold in the progression of thought.[43] This also provides the perspective from which to reduce "German idealism" speculatively to its a priori root.

Just as there exists an absolutizing of being in the moment of reality, so too is there an abstract fixing of the essence in the divine intellect. In both cases, being founders in the res. But in reality, the reception of being means the same thing for the essence as its being created or its being "positive reality" through and with being. "Before" the essence has received being, it is "nothing," except in God's creative intellect, wherein it is God's essence itself. But if it is overemphasized in its being posited *antequam esse habeat*, then it is also no longer conceived as "nothing" even in the divine intellect. We can never secure divine omnipotence by means of speculatively introducing the dimension of the possibilia into God! The moment one says "God can do '*everything*,'" he is no longer able to do anything! The contradiction "Yes and No at once"—which is, as Shakespeare's King Lear says, "no good divinity" ["*schlechte Theologie*"]—has in this case been transformed into the energy of the Spirit. The fullness of absolute ideality necessarily made itself into an absolutized metaphysics of the spirit; it had to be overcome in the rising up of the Son, who felt himself to be "left behind" by the Father, insofar as the Father allowed him to remain in the incest that characterizes the otherness to which God was subject (essence, matter). In truth, the "childish old man" had to chase after his "child," in whom all his necessity was poured out and for whom it was lost.[44] This has profound speculative significance!

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[43] Cf. the author's *Inwiefern ist die Konstruktion*, chap. 2.

Here is where we would look for the roots of the foundering of being's superessentiality in the res. Suarez thus says: "According to their common meaning, res and ens are used essentially as synonyms.... Using both terms is either without meaning or redundant."[45]

After everything that has come to light, we know that it is correct to affirm that being and essence are always already posited in unity: "We can, however, find nothing that can be predicated of every being *affirmatively and, at the same time, absolutely, with the exception of its essence* by which the being is said to be."[46] Regarding the essence, Thomas says, *secundum quam ens esse dicitur*, even though the ens is called being on the basis of the "to be": *Nomen entis sumitur ab esse rei.*[47] ... *Ens sumitur ab actu essendi.*[48] But if the entity is called a being according its essence, then this means nothing other than the fact that the weight of the positing of the reality of being unveils itself "through" the essence. Thus, because this results from the transnihilation of being and so makes manifest being's positivity, the essence of the entity is expressed "absolutely affirmatively."

Nevertheless, being does not arise from the essence: "it is participated in as something not belonging to the thing's essence."[49] "The entity is not called 'being' by virtue of a being that it itself is not."[50] These two statements imply one another. Precisely because being is superessential, the entire weight of the positive establishment of the res results from being itself, and being is "constituted through the principles of the essence."[51] We cannot affirm the one without by the same token co-affirming the other.

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[44] Shakespeare gave expression to the profound depths of this tragedy of fatherhood in *King Lear*.

[45] *Disp. metaph.* III. s.2., n. 4.

[46] *De ver.* 1.1.

[47] 1 *Sent.* 25.1.4.

[48] *De ver.* 1.1.

[49] *Quodl.* 2.1.1.

[50] *De ver.* 21.5.8.

[51] *Met.* 4.2.556 and 558.

Excursus: The Articulation of What Has Been Speculatively Opened Up in Terms of Supernatural Revelation

The dimension of the entitative structures that came forth in God enfeebled him as God the Father. Ens and res were identified, which means that the ontological difference was closed in the positive reality. God uses the finite to impose his own necessity [*vernotwendigt sich*]. The "nothing" (non subsistens), out of which the weight of the positively established entity comes to light, has thus become the root of nihilism. God has fallen into the prison of a "love" that perfects itself "as science" [*Wissenschaft*] and is depotentiated into the driving power of reflective "consciousness."

The little Thérèse of Lisieux—who said, "O most holy Trinity, You are the prison of my love"—has borne this temptation of the foundering of being's superessentiality and of enfeebled Fatherhood in its ultimate depths, suffered through it and overcome it. She stands in a hidden dialogue with Hegel and Nietzsche. The "little way" is at bottom nothing other than the experience of the hypostasis of being ruptured in the crucified love and wisdom, as the revelation of the glory of the Father (!) in the Holy Spirit. Here, the transnihilation of being is affirmed in its ultimate depths, the "entering onto the way" in the incalculable fullness of the "little one."

"I want everything"—the phrase that resounds within the poverty of the "little way"—bears witness to the being that does not cling to itself, the experience of God's loving presence [*Liebesgegenwart*] in the darkness of the "nothing," which nihilism radicalized, that "nothing" in which every bridge of the ontological vacillation of the *excessus determinatus* collapses into God.

The Little Thérèse has opened up for us a profound understanding of the relationship between fatherhood and virginity by means of her pressed [*gekeltertes*] heart. She has brought us closer to Mary of Nazareth. How is this so?

We saw that the decision of the crisis of being is the same thing as the determination of the finite as finite in the mode of nonbeing in God. Along with the enactment of being's movement of finitization, man has at the same time been given the task of speculatively determining the "nothing" in the locus of ideality, that is, the "Yes" to divine love and thus to the triune God himself. God reveals himself in the speculative enactment of the movement of finitization in the unfolding of subsistent being as its self-exhibition in reality, ideality, and bonicity through the likeness of his goodness: being as being.

The crisis of being, however, can be successfully undergone only on the basis of the revelation of the triune God, which is received in faith. The closure to this supernatural dimension of God's revelation that has come to pass in history [*geschichtlich ereigneten*] leads inescapably to a substantializing of being, insofar as its superessentiality is always already sealed in the exinanitio into the positively subsisting res. The substantializing of being in turn implies the dissolution of the *potentia oboedientialis*, which gets absorbed into being qua substantialized and therefore bound in a radical way to simple *natura*. The thinking of being is thus not emancipated, but rather it degenerates into pseudo-theology through a metaphysical decay. The ontological difference is closed, and grace is made to coincide with nature.

But in Mary of Nazareth, this difference is closed in a true sense, insofar as she is the first of the redeemed. She reveals in a profoundly mysterious way how the finite *as finite* can be a mirror of the triune act of love in God, without falling prey to the absolute closing of the difference. In this woman, it becomes evident how the finite becomes the obedient space of being's superessentiality, without this latter being imprisoned inside a finite nature. What follows is something we can express only awkwardly; we beg the reader's pardon for this.

If Mary were "only" the Father's daughter, and if the Father did not give her freely in virginal marriage to the Son, then this would mean that the Father is clinging to himself.

One may consider this theme in the terms of finite fatherhood in Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Goneril and Regan say to their father: You are everything to us! Cordelia, the youngest, insists on being freely given to her husband by her father in love, and thus she unmasks the father's "will to be everything." From this follow all the implications of the enfeebling of the Father, as we demonstrated them in Part A, chapter IV.5. God falls victim to his "other."

But, because he is wholly Other, he does not "need" the finite as a determinative otherness (materia!) in order (also) to mediate himself in the finite as finite. Mary is virgin, and remains so even in her motherhood. The *sola filia* ["*Nur-Tochter*"], who is not mother, leads to the *super-Deitas*. If Mary is not the mother of Jesus, then we would have to say, *falsa caro*. In this case, the exinanitio has not been carried out, being clings to itself as being, God is absolutized in his omnipotence, the hypostasis of being is posited, and being's movement of finitization is dissolved. But in the *sola mater*, who is not virgin, the Logos loses the Deitas; he becomes merely human! The positive reality, the posited essence, "swallows up" being and makes it into a potency for finite determination. The necessary sense of being, which is personally revealed in the Holy Spirit, is annulled. This is the "sola mater," who is not the Bride of the Son in the Holy Spirit.

The moment we affirm that God, who clings to himself as mere "absolute being" in the sense of an infinite essence, is mediated out of mere being in itself, then we have to burst open the sola virgo, since this would represent the finite reflection of God's infinite self-withholding. It is in this sense that Eckhart, in his sermon *Excepit illum mulier quaedam* on Luke 10:38,[52] seeks to unveil the virginal character of the soul only as "beginning." This virginity reaches its completion in the conception of Jesus as "the birth of God"! In terms of the ontological difference, this means: The essence is no longer receptive to being, and, stubbornly clinging to itself, hypostasizes being against itself! Being empties itself through the essence as the space of obedience to being.

Here, however, a self-withholding is already carried out a priori, a self-withholding that enters into transnihilation only subsequently through the conception and birth, and all the consequences (what is not yet mediated "arrives" at mediation) treated in Part A, chapter IV.5, follow from this.

The exinanitio as being's transnihilation is radicalized in the receptio by the essence, being and grace are incipiently substantialized, and the Deitas is gradually sacrificed to Jesus's mere humanity in the progression of thought. The *pure virginitas* that is fixed in the beginning is transformed into the sola mater. This problematic is passed on as a legacy to Protestant theology.

From all of this, it follows that the movement of superessential being's finitization is at stake in Mary, the virgin, and mother. In her, God has "his created mediation" (W. Klein). Her person is the bearer of the human nature that the Logos assumes. The exinanitio of the Logos gives her the grace of the perfect enactment of being's movement of finitization. By virtue of her openness in faith to God's arrival as man, the Incarnation ruptures the hypostasis of being, and redemption is accomplished. *In her, in the finite as finite*, as in a focal point of divine grace, every undergoing of being's movement of finitization unto the parousia of Jesus, in which the history of the "not yet" of the difference is brought to its conclusion, has its hidden "guide" ["*Richte*"]. It is in this sense that she is the "model (*Urbild*) of the Church" (cf. the conclusion of Part A, chap. VI.1.D, this volume). Here, profound perspectives open up for our understanding of the Church, which we cannot follow out any further in the present context.

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[52] Cf. J. Quint, 159, in Meister Eckhart, *Selected Writings* (New York: Penguin, 1994), 193*ff.*

But because the triune God is "given as a task" ["*aufgegeben*"] to finite reason in its carrying out of the crisis of being, the obedience to being is rooted in the obedience of faith. The obedience of faith thus liberates the obedience to being without closing the difference and enfeebling the triune God into a prisoner of the logicized spirit.

Being does not founder in the positive res; the virgo cannot be sacrificed to the mater. The absolute Yes to the positivity of the finite as finite is being itself, in which and through which the triune God reveals himself in the infinity of his positivity. This, too, is the message that the Little Thérèse has brought to us.

Whoever has reflected on all this in faith will understand whence philosophy ultimately receives its motivating, and indeed determinative, impulse. The rejection of revelation, which we often find so radicalized today, the entrusting of oneself to the question concerning being as being in the sober wait for the "godly god," itself draws its sustenance from the hidden impulse of the Spirit of God, who hands over to us the ontological difference, to be sure as having been brought home, but also as what has to be undergone ever anew … until the Lord comes again. The selfless "training of oneself in the thinking of being" is in reality only the manifestation of the truth that we ourselves can never make nature and grace coincide [*zur Deckung bringen*]. But such a thinking of being runs the great danger of looking at the "second coming" [*Wieder-kunft*] of the incarnate God as something simply lying in the future [*An-kunft*], and thus falling into the situation of the Old Testament, neglecting the exinanitio as already having occurred, dissolving the transnihilation of being, and sacrificing the incarnational pull toward the poverty of the "little one" to the hypostasized "fate of being" ["*Seinsgeschick*"]. But in this case the question of being comes once again to naught. There would be much to say in this regard. An engagement [*Auseinandersetzung*] with Heidegger would have to take this as its starting point.

8. Ens and Unum: The Positing of Reality and the Unum

We have seen what happens when being is identified with res, or, in other words, when being collapses into essence. Let us now take a further step in the unfolding of the transcendentals.

After having determined the modus that expresses something affirmatively in being, as res, we want to consider the modus that expresses something "negative" more closely.

Thomas continues in the text: "There is, however, a negation consequent upon every being considered absolutely: its undividedness, and this is expressed by *one*. For the *one* is simply undivided being."

The essence provides the basis for interpreting not only the affirmative positing of the res, but also the division, limitation, and multiplication of being. We already presented this at great length earlier (cf. Part A, chap. V, this volume), so in the present context we can be brief.

The first thing that the intellect perceives is ens; the second "is the negation of being. From these two there follows thirdly the understanding of distinction (since from the fact that we understand that this thing is and that it is not that thing it follows in our understanding [*sequitur in intellectu*] [!] that these two are *distinct* [*divisum*])."[53]

The multiplicity of existing things arose, however, from the bonitas of being: "For He brought things into being in order that His goodness might be communicated to creatures, and be represented by them; and *because His goodness could not be adequately represented by one creature alone,* He produced many and diverse creatures, that what was wanting to one in the representation of the divine goodness might be supplied by another."[54] God does not manifest himself in a second God. Only the multiplicity of finite beings can succeed in making manifest the infinite simplicity of being as the likeness of the divine goodness: "Therefore, just as the first rational principle of divine providence is simply the divine goodness, so the first rational principle in creatures is their numerical plurality, to the establishment and conservation of which *all other things* seem to be ordered."[55] Just as what is at issue for the bonitas divina is the multiplicity of beings, so too what is at issue for being in its movement of finitization is its unity with itself.

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[53] *De pot.* 9.7.15.
[54] *ST* 1.47.1.
[55] *SCG* 3.97.

Nevertheless, we saw that the essence in its unity per seipsam often traps thinking and so causes its foregrasp toward being to end up in being's pseudo-subsistence. Because being mediates itself through the essence and this latter divides and multiplies being, the unity in multiplicity gets unfolded in a distorted manner on the basis of the aforementioned speculative a priori in two different ways: unity and multiplicity separate from one another. On the one hand, the absolutized essence is no longer the place in which the crisis of being presents itself in relation to the *numerositas entium*. The essence can from this perspective only scatter the shards of being in an absolute division and being thus loses its *indivisum* quality. The "divisio of being and nonbeing" in the sense of the negation of being's being divided goes radically astray.

On the other hand, the substantialization of being makes it no longer possible to see why one being ought to be divided from another, since being as being has excluded all negation a priori. This presumptuous unity has rejected all division, without "sublating" it.

If finite reason allows being to be divided in ideality by virtue of its own power, it fails to grasp the divisio of being and nonbeing. In so doing, it illuminates this divisio from the perspective of the divisio of this entity from that one, for "non potest esse quod ens dividatur ab ente inquantum est ens."[56] The proposition *nihil dividitur ab ente nisi non ens* does not hold for a being that is substantialized in ideality. The *ens indivisum* cannot be anticipated in the ontological vacillation, or otherwise being would founder in the essence, the positive reality would lose its metaphysical origin and the unum, as ens indivisum, would internally collapse.

It is correct to say that the concept of the "divisio" ["*Scheidung*"] of being and nonbeing arises from being and nonbeing so long as we keep the concretely subsisting entity in view: "Per hoc quod in hoc ente includitur negatio illius entis."[57] It is "first" in this dimension that being and nonbeing are divided from each other, and indeed in such a way that nonbeing is not rejected, but rather sublated in being, and it is precisely in this sublation that being first manifests its positivity. It is thus that we can rightly claim that the "divisio cadit in intellectu ex ipsa negatione entis." If the separation of being and nonbeing were to occur in ideality, then this would imply the positing of an absolute divisio, and entities would have to merge together in the ontological vacillation; the finite would not exist in its incalculable [*unverrechenbaren*] singularity. If we reflect on all of this, we will understand the speculative depth contained in Thomas's statement: "Ens est indivisum in se et divisum ab alio."

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[56] *In de Trinit.* 4.1.

[57] *In de Trinit.* 4.1.

Insofar as the unum is separated from the other, it has the negation of the other in itself and has thus sublated nonbeing in itself. This nonbeing is something altogether different from an element of the entity's self-affirmation as unum. Nonbeing has its roots in the undivided character of the entity's positing of its positive reality, in which being affirms and preserves itself in its unity: "a thing safeguards its unity as it safeguards its esse."[58] But if the necessary sense of being is annulled in the speculative enactment of being's transnihilation, then being's undivided character dissolves, insofar as being does not affirm itself in concrete subsistence; that is, it fails to achieve itself in the innermost heart of goodness.

But being never arrives at itself in a single essence. If the unum is speculatively grasped from this perspective, then it is grasped not only in a single ens, but for all existing things [*für alles Seiende*].

We have thus attempted to give a speculative interpretation of the five steps that Aquinas presents in the following text: "The *first* object of the intellect is *being;* the *second* is the *negation of being*. From these two there *follows thirdly the understanding of distinction* (since from the fact that we understand that this thing is and that it is not that thing we realize that these two are distinct [it occurs out of the convertibility of being and 'nothing,' but has come to fulfillment in the concrete subsistence of being as existing among entities!]): and it follows *fourthly* that the intellect apprehends the *idea of unity*, in that it understands that this thing is not divided in itself; and *fifthly* the intellect apprehends *number*, in that it understands this as distinct from that and each as one in itself."[59]

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[58] *ST* 1.11.1.

[59] *De pot.* 9.7.15.

9. The Indifference of the Unum in Relation to Being and Essence and Being's Movement of Finitization

The affirmatio of the res and the negatio of the unum thus always belong originally together and are intelligible solely on the basis of the dimension of being's movement into subsistence as it has been opened up in speculation, insofar as we focus our gaze in a particular way on the ontological moment of reality when we interpret the res and the unum.

Now, starting with the reality, the essence has come into play in a twofold way: on the one hand, in the positing of the res out of the act of being's transnihilation from out of the crisis, and on the other, on the basis of the *unitas essentiae per seipsam*, whereby being is affirmed in unity with itself and is sealed as indivisum: "And therefore every *thing* must be one by virtue of its essence."[60]

But here we encounter something even more profound, namely, the relation of the unum to the bonum. The absolute simplicity of being as being in ideality ought not to be confused with the unity that the essence has through itself. Thomas therefore says that "it *makes no difference* (*indifferenter*) to the one whether it be referred to essence or to existence. Hence the essence of a thing is one of itself (*una per seipsam*), not because of its act of existing; and so it is not one by any participation, though it is a being and good in this way."[61]

If the unum were expressed in the absolute simplicity of its ideality in the same way with respect to the posited essence and with respect to being, then reflection would be able to grasp a link from the simplicity of being to the essence, which would inevitably merge being with the essence. But in this case, we would once again be left with the substantializing of being.

Let us now enter more deeply into the indifference of the unum! Thomas says, "From the fact that the existence of a thing is not called a being because of an existence distinct from itself it does not follow that the substance of the thing is not said to be by an existence which is distinct from it."[62] This sentence gives expression to being's fissure through to concrete subsistence in all its radicality. The entity is in this case not called being on the basis of a being that it itself is not, and the goodness of a thing would not be called good on the basis of a goodness that it itself is not. "Thus, the goodness of a thing is called good: sicut esse rei dicitur ens."[63]

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[60] *ST* 1.6.3.1.

[61] *De ver.* 21.5.8.

[62] *De ver.* 21.5.8.

But the same thing cannot be said about unitas, since the unum is indifferently related to being and essence.

The condition of possibility for the positing of the essence as a unitas per seipsam is the truth that the essence does not participate in this unity. The posited unity of the essence, however, is nothing other than the sign of the "unity" of superessential being that doesn't cling to itself. The real distinction between being and essence therefore results from the indifference of the unum with respect to the principles. Being can mediate itself to the concrete subsistence only because the essence has a unity per seipsam and through this unity decides upon the impossibility of a fixing of being in ideality. But the sublation of this fixation is sealed in the kenosis of being as transnihilation through to the ens indivisum, so that the indifference of the unum in relation to being and essence is precisely the condition of possibility for a genuinely metaphysical conception of the unum as ens indivisum.

The indifference of the unum thus makes possible the full speculative unfolding of the movement of finitization. The unity of the essence is not the unity of being. Because the unum relates itself indifferently to the act of being and the essence, there is such a thing as being's movement into subsistence, in which the reality and the ideality reveal themselves precisely in the confluence of being into the innermost heart of bonicity in differentiated unity. Because of the indifference of the unum with respect to being and essence, the unity of the essence can never produce the unity of being from itself, and the positive reality can never be absolutized. Being, therefore, does not lie next to God as a posited res; instead, the unum precisely opens being up into the absolute ground and includes being within it [*in den absoluten Grund auf- und ein-geschlossen*].

The unum therefore holds the ontological difference open in a particular way. The *ratio perfectionis* cannot be ascribed to it, insofar as the unum does not reveal itself *in positione* (like the ratio of the bonum), "which adds *no negation* to the ens."[64] Because the unity of being is not identical to the unity of the essence, then the ratio perfectionis of the *ens* cannot lie in the unum. But this is not to be understood in such a way that the unum would be related to the bonum as the imperfect to the perfect. Being does not affirm itself as unum any less in the innermost heart of its bonitas!

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[63] *De ver.* 21.5.8.

[64] Cf. *De ver.* 21.5.7.

However, we must recall that the speculative opening of the "movement" of the transcendental exhibition of being has its ground in precisely this indifference of the unum with respect to being and essence. Therefore thought continues along in the pull of the transcendental unfolding and does not get stuck in the positive reality of the indivisum: "It must be said that 'one' *does not include the idea of perfection*, but *only* of indivision, which belongs to everything according to its own *essence*."[65] Because the unum is expressed according to the entity's essence, it comes to lie in being's transcendental self-presentation in the reality, insofar as this has its measure in the positing of the essence. An entity becomes good, however, not primarily through the essence; instead, it is designated "good" according to the degree to which it possesses "to be": "Unumquodque tantum habet de bono, quantum habet de esse."[66] The perfection of being thus receives its light from being's superessentiality, which is sealed in the bonum.

But this is not to be understood in such a way that the essence, and with it the positive reality, would fall outside of the bonum. In this case, being as love would first of all have to be revolutionized by reason in order to bring the essence into its positivity. But this presupposes that the essence does not proceed from being, that is, that it is set off against being. This implies in turn the ontological vacillation, so that the "pneumatic" conception of being's mediation toward subsistence would fix being as logicized in ideality prior to this movement.

Even though the "unum non importat rationem perfectionis, sed indivisionis tantum," the indivisio is a bonum. The sequence of the transcendental explication ought not to lead us to separate the moment of reality, as a field of interpretation, from the suppositum. Therefore Thomas says, "But unity belongs to the idea of goodness.... For a thing *so far exists as* it is one. Whence we observe that things resist division, as far as they can; and the dissolution of a thing arises from defect therein."[67] "Because the good of each thing consists in a certain unity, inasmuch as each thing has, united in itself, the elements of which its perfection consists."[68]

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[65] *ST* 1.6.3.1.
[66] *ST* 1–2.18.1.
[67] *ST* 1.103.3.
[68] *ST* 1–2.36.3.

The unum as indivisum thus receives its light from the positing of the essence, which has unity in itself, in the dimension of that ontological moment in which the principles are always already blended together in the positive reality. The undivided character of every res comes to it according to its essence, just as the word *res* expresses the entity's essence.[69]

10. Ens and Aliud-quid: The Consonance [*Übereinkunft*] of Beings in the Positing of the Essence

"If the mode of being is taken in the second way—according to the relation of one being to another—we find a twofold use. The first is based on the distinction of one being from another, and this distinctness is expressed by the word *something*, which implies, as it were, *some other thing*. For, just as a being is said to be *one* in so far as it is without division in itself, so it is said to be *something* in so far as it is divided from others."[70]

With the aliquid, the ens sets itself forth in the dimension of reality in a new way.

The essence divides being. But the ens, insofar as it is ens, cannot be separated from itself or divided. This divisio is possible only if we keep in mind the transnihilation of being through to the positive substance that has always already been carried out: "Likewise also from this being, this being is not divided, unless in this-being there is included negation of the same being."[71] But while being's undivided character came to light in the unum, insofar as the essence mediates being to subsistent unity with itself, without this "path toward unity" being derivable exclusively from the essence, we now are considering the positing of the essence, not in relation to the undivided character of the ens in itself but rather in relation to the separation of the one from the other.

We fail to grasp the undivided character of being if we follow the "path" toward the unity of being with itself "wholly according to the essence" ["*rein essentiell*"]. To be sure, in this case, the essence would indeed mediate being in its unity, but being, in the finite substance, as indivisum would not be able to negate the non-necessity of the appearance or sublate it, and would remain imprisoned by the negation that the unum adds to the ens, in a depotentiating way.

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[69] Cf. *De ver.* 1.1.

[70] *De ver.* 1.1.

[71] *In de Trinit.* 4.1.

The unum is not given as a univocal essence, fixed in itself; it unveils itself as indivisum out of the self-affirmation of being in the concrete subsistence, in which being sublates the essence in such a way that it first affirms itself through the essence.

But if the unum is determined solely on the basis of the essence, then the appearance remains as the "ring" of the non-necessary that surrounds the res that is undivided in itself; the appearance is not negated—that is, it is not sublated in the substantial ground—which is why the substance also fails to bring itself to manifestation in the appearance. The unum determined on the basis of the essence fragments into parts, precisely at the moment that it repels the parts from itself. There is therefore a "transition" from the parts into the undivided core and from the undivided core into the parts.

By virtue of the aforementioned speculative a priori, the unum has to try to preserve itself either by leaving the essentiell dimension wholly behind itself and withdrawing into the ideality of being's pseudo-subsistence, or by immediately collapsing into the appearance. The two paths into the absolutized appearance or into substantialized being necessary imply one another.

We therefore have to say that the essence does indeed mediate being to itself, that the speculative path to the indivisum nevertheless does not have to be carried out in a merely *essentiell* fashion, since the essence is posited for the sake of the superessentiality of the being that doesn't cling to itself. It is only the necessary sense of being, in which being's superessentiality comes to light, that preserves the indivisum without annulling the divisio.

The same thing holds for the aliquid, which follows ens as a transcendental: *secundum divisionis unius ab altero*. The divisio of the one from the other occurs for the sake of being, insofar as one entity is separated from another, since it includes the negation of the other in itself.

The absolutized essence, by contrast, sets itself in opposition to being and proves that the potency of being has been determined by forcing being into absolute division. Pure division would signify nothing other than the neutralized positing of impenetrable particularities, which are no longer gathered together in the origin, both in themselves and in relation to others, by the unifying power of being. In this case, there are only infinitely many "quids" juxtaposed to one another, which is why the aliud-quid would obviously be eliminated, since all ordination of one thing to another is destroyed. We thus see that even the aliud-quid draws its sustenance from the necessary sense of being, which unmasks the errant construction of the absolutized transnihilation of being in the positing of the essence as a deception and allows being, precisely out of the transnihilation, to shine forth as "pure mediation." For this reason, every "quid" is an aliud-quid. Because the essences proceed from being, they are always already mediated to one another from out of being's infinite simplicity: *not as essences posited for their own sake, however, but as really posited entities. This is what allows a modus of ens to be determined in the ordination of beings to one another, on the basis of the positing of the essence: the aliud-quid.* What comes to light in this ordination, therefore, of the one to the other is a convenientia, or consonance, in the "dimension of the essence." Precisely because of the positing of the essence, the unifying positivity of being is also at play in the "aliud" of the quid and unifies the beings with one another in their essential form [*Wesensgestalt*]. Even the aliud-quid cannot be interpreted except from within being's superessentiality.

The unity of the essence, which is posited in itself and is not participated, necessarily has otherness in itself (the "otherness-from-others" ["*Zu-Anderen-anders*"]), insofar as the many essences divide being into various beings and are therefore unable to have only the "nothing" outside of themselves, as being does. This is why every quid is an aliud-quid. The only thing that is a "non-aliud" is subsistent being itself, which, as the wholly other, has "nothing" outside of itself. It is only when God is essentialized into the *Summum Ens* that he presents himself as the wholly other who intrudes into finitude as an enemy.

But, once again, this does not mean that God is not an "aliquid." It is just that we have to properly understand this assertion and lead it as it were into the speculative crisis. The finite essence has the other essences outside of itself in the sense of the aliud. Since in God as ipsum esse subsistens being and essence are identical, he thus does not have the essences outside of himself as other, as there is nothing external to being other than nonbeing. Moreover, God is therefore not an aliud-quid in relation to these essences; otherwise, he would be made into the Absolute res over against the finite res, in a deistic fracturing of the relationship between the Creator and creation. To be sure, however, God as subsistent being itself has the finite essences in intellectu divino in the mode of nonbeing, wherein it is nevertheless not an entity, but is rather the divine essence itself.

Also with respect to this "nothing," the otherness that is *thought* in God is not an aliud-quid for God. Otherwise, God would no longer be able to think this "nothing" as himself: *in Deo omnia Deus*; the "nothing" would have to separate itself from God as something not thought—that is, as contradictory—and in the same moment the "nothing" would be replaced by a dimension of essences emerging in the divine intellect, which gradually provoke God to create. If God is thus called an aliud-quid, the proposition refers to God from the perspective of the positively established finite res, which takes its name from the essence. The divine essence [*Wesen*] is not the created quiddity [*Wesenheit*]. But this statement ought not to be left in the speculative illumination of this relationship, because otherwise being's movement into subsistence would be absorbed into the finite res, and the unfolding of participation in being would reach its peak in the constitution of the infinite and the finite *ens*, which would come to lie *next to one another* (in the sense of the *aliud*) at the level of the ontological vacillation.

The ontological moment of reality is thus set forth in a threefold way. First, in the res, which also includes being's nonsubsistence. This nonsubsistence is what makes the positing of the essence intelligible as the dimension of being's self-communication.

Second, in the unum, in which the nonsubsistence of being as being makes itself felt [*zur Geltung kommt*] in the negation of division and in the *divisum ab alio*, because otherwise entities would either have to merge together in the ontological vacillation or fragment in absolute division.

Third, in the aliquid, in which being's nonsubsistence unveils itself in the aliud of the quid.

What comes to expression in these three transcendental modes of being is how profoundly significant the transcendentality of the "nothing" is, insofar as this names being's nonsubsistence. Both in being's transnihilation in the positing of the res and in the undividedness of the ens and in the aliquid (being other is a mode of nonbeing!), the "nothing" holds sway, exchanging itself for being in the crisis, precisely because it is in this exchange that the positivity of being is revealed.

But just as the absolute positivity of being is unveiled in the convertibility of being and "nothing," a positivity that shines out for us in its superessentiality, so too the "nothing" does not enter into the play of the transcendentals, whether it be as constitutive, as limit, as contradiction, as counterpoint, or whatever term one would want to use to make this dialectic palatable. No, every deficiency and self-diminution of finite being *is* the revelation of the positivity of being itself. Every involvement of "nonbeing" in the unfolding of the transcendentals is possible only on the basis of the superabundance of being, which has its seal in the abyss of love.

But because, in the thinking of being, we no longer "entrust" ourselves to being itself—and indeed one can no longer trust being once it has been essentialized and rendered ambiguous—we have lost the will to endure speculatively the labor of the transcendentality of the "nothing."

If the "nothing" is taken to be transcendentally constitutive of the unfolding, then the radicality of its self-exchange for being is thereby rendered void. It is not the convertibility of being and the "nothing" in the crisis that enfeebles being, but rather the angst of thinking, which posits the nothing next to being in the crisis in order to claim its positivity, and makes the non-ens into a constitutive element of the unfolding of being!

We admit that one could look at our undertaking with concern, precisely in view of Hegel. It would be only too easy for this "extreme measure" in the speculative undergoing of the crisis of being to become totally perverse, if thinking failed to open itself in obedience to the necessary sense of being. But we are fully aware of these temptations; indeed, we have attempted to sound them out in all their speculative depth.

But dangers alone are not able to hold thinking back from taking the risk, despite all temptation, of staying true to the center, which is always an "akron." We are only too aware of the misunderstandings and mistaken interpretations that can arise from what has been said. But if these depths of being are perverted, then the statement holds that *curruptio optimi pessima.* A small error at the "beginning" leads in the end to the radical perversion of thought's entire movement.[72]

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[72] Cf. Prol. in *E. E.*

II

The Completion of the Transcendental Unfolding and the Essence of Man

1. Reason in the Enactment of Being's Movement of Finitization and Man as Its Focal Point

A. Looking Ahead and "Assurance" in the Risk in Via

We said that the consonance that occurs at the level of the positing of the essence is intelligible only from the perspective of being's superessentiality. We experienced this superessentiality in the crisis of being, into which finite reason stretches itself in its apprehending. It has always already "come into its own" ["*ereignet*"] out of this crisis in subsistence as concrete and embodied.

The crisis of being has been the "radiant" background (*esse ad lucem pertinet*[1]) of the entire unfolding up to this point, and now an even more profound depth of being's ideality seems to shine forth and to become determinative.

The "dimension" of the entity's reality has been laid bare. This dimension cannot be isolated. It follows that the ideality of being (verum) and the bonum were also speculatively "present" in the interpretation of the res, the unum, and the aliquid. But our thinking, which in its wayfaring state can grasp things only one after the other, required abstraction. "The dimension of reality" was thus interpreted in abstraction and as it were set apart for itself. We have allowed ourselves to take this risk because we believe that we are able to withstand all the temptations that arise from it so long as we think simply and soberly in obedience to the necessary sense of being, which annihilates all the ambiguities of abstraction, purifies thinking in its—often painful—fire, and shows it the proper path: *recta sapere*.

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[1] Augustine, *En. in Ps.* 7.19.

The parameters of the dimension we are attempting to interpret were set by the movement of finitization. There is no need to underscore how fruitful this dimension is. But it is still necessary to make ourselves aware of a particular danger.

In our interpretation, we are constantly tempted to "retract" the three ontological moments "back" into the *movement* into subsistence: the moment of ideality gets set in place in an isolated crisis, in order to find a speculative "beginning" for the movement of finitization; the moment of reality gets fixed in the positing, and the moment of bonicity gets dissolved into a "between" separating ideality and reality, which ultimately reveals itself as the reflection of reason. As reflection "in the bonum," reason enacts nothing other than the negation of the negation, that is, the resolution of the contradiction that had been made into a beginning.

In this case, bonicity becomes irrational, which is not the same thing as "superessential." But being thus comes to failure in concrete speculation. The movement of finitization as such has *no* ideality or reality; it is only the concrete, finite being that enacts itself in these moments. Thus, if we now return to the principles, in our case to the transcendentals, and thereby attempt to unfold them out of their unifying root, then we so to speak open being in its concrete subsistence; that is, we open *quid* unumquodque *est* into the dimension of the participation in being.

Here, however, we run into the temptation to "spread out" being as finite reason's field of interpretation within the framework of the participation in being, in a manner that allows us to interpret the juxtaposition of the transcendentals as arising from an original unity. Such an endeavor nevertheless dissolves the concrete subsistence of being that has always already come to pass. Let us hold on to this insight as we continue our exploration.

B. The Anima Humana and the Difference between Being and Beings in the Movement of Finitization: The Initial Elucidation of the Theme

After we have explored the res, the unum, and the aliquid in the dimension of reality, the sustaining background of our speculative interpretation comes to the fore as such.

The *aliquid* stood for "consonance" (*convenientia*) in the sense of the ordination of the one to the other in the realm of the positing of the essence.

This order disclosed itself from the vantage of being's superessentiality, which now once again enters onto the speculative stage in the opening of the ontological difference of being from the substance. But a further modus comes to light—namely, *generaliter consequens omne ens*—in relation to being as being. This mode is demonstrated according to the correspondence of one entity to another, but it nevertheless does not take its measure from the medium of the already achieved positing of the reality. Instead, it makes being as being manifest in the spirit.

But being does not subsist in ideality. For this reason, *this* consonance of beings cannot be established as consonance on the basis of a hypostasized medium of being. Something must therefore be found that preserves being in its crisis and that belongs originally with it, without substantializing being there; in other words, there must be an actuality that is capable of "sustaining" being speculatively in the crisis and on this basis providing a ground for the convenientia between one being and others without being thereby degenerating into a hypostasis. In short, what we need to discover is the condition of possibility of a speculative carrying out [*Austrags*] of the ontological difference.

But the spirit—that is, the finite reason that is obedient to being—"receives" the crisis from being without identifying itself with it. Thus, after the speculative movement of thought once again comes to a stand inside the difference of "being in the crisis" from the "positively existing entity," Thomas continues in the following way: "The second division is based on the correspondence one being has with another. This is possible only if there is something which is such that it agrees with every being. Such a being is the soul, which, as is said in *The Soul,* 'in some way is all things.'"[2] It is poignant to see how Thomas introduces the anima humana here in the same moment in which the process of thought opens itself up once again into the difference of being from beings and as it were comes to a stand in the plumb line [*Lot*] of the movement of finitization. The crisis of being becomes thematic in a new way, and it is precisely in this plumb line of being's movement of finitization that Thomas speaks about the anima humana, which *natum est convenire cum omne ente.*

To be sure, the anima's convenientia with every being is possible only because the soul has always already opened itself into being and is ordered

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[2] *De ver.* 1.1.

[*verfügt*] to itself—that is, into its concrete subsistence—by being. The correspondence the soul has with all beings is intelligible only on the basis of being itself. But because Thomas says that the anima is "born" [*natum*] for this—namely, to come into correspondence with all beings—the correspondence does not occur in each and every newly posited foregrasp of reason toward being; instead, in its a priori completeness, as *actual spirit*, reason is always already the abiding power [*die waltende Macht*] of this convenientia. Its unfurlment [*Ausgespanntsein*] in the enactment of the crisis of being, the sustaining of the movement of finitization, is already the essence of the anima, or, in other words, it is the soul itself as the concretely existing focal point of the onto-logical difference, in which the relationship between person and nature comes to light. Otherwise, it would make no sense at all to say, "Because it *is born* to correspond to every entity." "The meaning of being itself *cannot* be unknown to us."[3] Being's movement of finitization—out of which the abyssal dimension of analogy was unveiled to us, ontological spatiotemporality set itself forth, and in which the fullness of being's transcendental self-presentation is rooted—"is" the theme of the anima humana. But we must guard against making this movement into the soul's root as "movement." The speculative determination of the transcendental theme of the embodied spirit is legitimate only if it is illuminated on the basis of the concrete subsistence of precisely this spirit!

To be sure, the anima stretches itself perceptively into being as being, it is open to all things, because it possesses the proper theme of its life in its following of being's movement into subsistence. But in this act it only too easily encounters the danger of holding up its infinite openness—which unlocks and awakens being as being and to which nothing is external other than nonbeing—to all other things as an absolute measure and to arrogate to itself the ability to measure being as such, making its own claim on it.[4] The soul's a priori perfection thus never comes to completion beyond, but always only in and through its factically historical existence. The a priority of the disclosedness of being's movement of finitization in the concretely subsisting soul does not allow itself to be either objectified as a conceptual type or systematized as the theme of individualized self-initiated operations. The soul's *quodammodo omnia* is not something over which it has radical control. It achieves its openness only in the historical limitedness of its existence.

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[3] *De ver.* II.1.3.

[4] Cf. in this volume Part A, chap. VI.1.A: "The ambiguity of the 'nothing' as the measure of reason."

We thus see how deeply the soul appropriates being's movement of finitization into its origins, but also how profoundly it is exposed to the temptation to fail in the obedience of love that is therein given thematically to the soul as its task. The entire quality of the soul's existence [*Lebensvollzug*] stands and falls with the Yes or No to being's exinanitio. Man himself is this "task" ["*Aufgabe*"] of obedience to being in concrete subsistence. The consonance of beings achieves its ultimate order [*Ordnung*] and unity in the human face. It is not in a general image of man, but rather in the concrete face of the concrete man in his historicity. Everything that exists is unlocked and opened up in this unity by the anima humana, but in such a manner as to be liberated thereby into its own depths in a profoundly mysterious way, invited ever more deeply into itself, and brought to itself only by being gathered together in the focal point [*Thema*] of being's movement into subsistence, which man is.

Being is not something foreign to the anima humana; but the soul has also not captured being in its reflection in such a way that its historical existence would turn out to be nothing but a juxtaposition of the sequential unpacking of an essentialized past that simply repeats itself into the future. Historicity as such makes a decision concerning the impossibility of a hypostasizing of being; that is, man's historicity in its most profound depths is nothing but the constant focal point of being's exinanitio (through the enactment of the finite spirit), which to be sure allows all facticity to arise from itself, but makes its superessentiality manifest only in the "poverty" of historical facticity. Therefore the fact that finite spirit has always already "been-with-being" does not make the ontological difference "a thing of the past" or something that has been closed. If it did, the convertibility of being and "nothing," which has been entrusted to man as the "task of being" in such a way that he is nothing other than the response to this assigned task, would be annulled.

The anima humana draws its sustenance from the *luminous night of being* [*Licht-Nacht des Seins*], which is nothing other than the "crisis of being" that has been made manifest in the spirit. We call it the "luminous night" because being is infinite simplicity and perfection, even while it does not subsist. The anima's convenientia with all entities occurs out of this crisis of being. It does not happen in the sense that the "to be," as the actuality of all acts, frees the anima humana, as it were, from its imprisonment inside itself and releases it into the ideality in which it opens to both the finite and the infinite. If this were the case, we would have to interpret the anima, prior to being's liberating penetration into the soul, not as reason, but as abstract understanding, which exhausts itself in partial perspectives. Being would have to take this abstract fixedness of the anima, so to speak, as its antithesis, which could arrive at concrete synthesis only by being burst open into superessential being, an act that would also allow being at the same time to undergo mediation. As the object of ratio, being would not be able to shine forth in its fullness, but could be given only as "empty being," which would come to itself only in the dynamic of anima's pneumatic opening to all things. The anima would thus not in fact be open to all things from its origin, but would instead achieve this openness in a subsequent moment, through the mediation of being (in concrete fullness) with itself. It can readily be seen that here the "secondary process" of human actualization is being confused with the original, substantiell in-grounding [*Eingründung*] of human existence by the spirit's reception of being. In the acts of this secondary actualization, the anima admittedly can gain access to ever more profound dimensions of existence and thus enact the foregrasp out toward being ever more radically and authentically. This would follow the progression in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* from consciousness, in its metaphysical orientation toward the "in-itself," into the depths of "self-consciousness," whereby being as immediate in-itselfness enters into mediation and the truth as substance, sublated into the subject, "is" subject. But this act of reflection can never substitute for the establishment of the anima in its concrete subsistence, which has always already occurred, since this being-called-into-being never comes to be as a result of the empty, logicized being, but rather as a result of the likeness of the divine goodness. Otherwise, reason would not be given metaphysically, but in a certain sense only in the "*historical*" state of the perversion of the hypostasis of being, which needs to be overcome, and indeed would first have to be sublated in the "speculative Good Friday." The theologoumenon of natura corrupta, however, lies hidden in this metaphysical a priori, which allows the illumination and disclosure of being's superessentiality only in the historical acts of something fundamentally "new," that is, of a "state of redemption."

If we begin from this metaphysical a priori, we are unable to speak of the anima as open, from its essence, to all things. The soul can never be "presupposed" in a material sense prior to being for the still-yet-to-be-enacted opening to all things, since in that very moment it would be enfeebled in its spiritual capacity. This makes evident to us the truth that the embodied spirit originally "belongs together" with being in the crisis itself, though this does not mean that thought can take the ontological vacillation as its point of departure. Because the convertibility of being and "nothing" is the speculative beginning of being's movement of finitization, which revealed itself as the basic structure of the event of creation, however, man's essence comes to light in an abyssal a priori as the "normative pattern" of creation. Man harbors in himself the entire dimension of the participation in being. He is given the task of sheltering being's movement of finitization cosmically, in the undergoing of being's kenosis, that is, of the ontological difference.

Thomas therefore says, "The soul's *simple essence* is as the material element, while its *participated existence* is its formal element; which participated existence necessarily coexists with the soul's essence, because existence naturally follows the form."[5] But the *anima intellectiva*[6] is originally opened into being, which follows the anima as the form of the essence, so that the movement into subsistence out of the exinanitio of being is the basic outline of the enactment of its existence, and indeed of its entire activity as embodied spirit. For the being in which the anima subsists and into which it is always already opened up as reason, is the being of the *whole* man.[7]

We will therefore see later that man's concrete self-enactment, as ecstasis in the medium of corporeality along the path of the senses in outermost exteriority and as return to itself in the innermost interiority of the spirit, is nothing other than the concrete interpretation of being's movement of finitization, that is, of the ontological difference that has always already been undergone in the obedience to being.[8] But just as *esse completum et simplex* (in the sense of the *formale* of embodied spirit) does not subsist, so too is it not possible for the *simplex essentia* to cling to itself (as a result of being's transnihilation). It has blossomed forth into the being-there [*ins Dasein*] of the ontological present, and indeed in the procession of the powers (cf. Part A, chap. VII.3, this volume), through the formal element of being, which it receives as reason that has always already been with being, which it mediates to the matter. This is something we are taking for granted in anticipation of what is to come.

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[5] *ST* 1.90.2.1.

[6] *ST* 1.76.6.

[7] Cf. *An.* 1.1.

[8] Although we can only point to this here, the inner tendency of our work thus corresponds to Hegel's efforts in the *Logic* and in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the profound concerns of which we accept and the speculative unity of which will come ever more clearly to light as we follow our path—in the connection between the vertical ontological difference and the horizontal enactment of the exitus and reditus of embodied reason.

But because being's self-mediation to subsistence in participation never occurs next to God—since God admittedly negates participation by virtue of the absolute positivity of his being, but this negation nevertheless is not a rejection of participation but rather its sublation in God—man, as the basic form of the movement of finitization, sheds some light on the inner life of God himself in a profoundly mysterious way. Indeed, one can say that man himself is God's "motive" for creation! This is not meant in the sense of an a priori projection, which would impose necessity on God or subject him to change [*affizierte*]! Instead, the truth of man "in" God results from the original belonging together of being and man: not from reason's construction of the hypostasis of being, but from the freely given, infinite gift of being as the likeness of divine love. From this perspective, we understand again more deeply how originally the history of being and the history of salvation belong together, and what it means to say that, through the kenosis of the Logos, man is carried to his home in the proper and genuine response to the gift of the being that doesn't cling to itself. Let us take note of this dimension, into which we will be led through the following attempt to unfold a metaphysics of man and to present its basic features. At this point, we only indicate these notions. May the reader not become impatient because they cannot be elaborated immediately. We first need to sketch out the parameters of the space in which we will have to make our way in thought. The unfolding of the transcendentals itself has led us into this dimension, following the pull of the subject matter itself. It will later become clearer why this "interruption" of our interpretation of *De ver.* 1.1 was necessary at precisely this point.

c. Anima and Intellectus: The Unfolding of the Movement of Finitization

We would like, right at the outset, to clear away a misunderstanding that might cast a false light over our whole endeavor. When we repeatedly speak about "intellect" in the course of our elaborations, then it seems to lend some weight to the objection that we are "falsely intellectualizing" ["*verintellektualisiert*"] the soul as the original "locus" of the opened ontological difference.

The intellect—one might rightly claim—is in fact just one of the anima's powers; it is not a substantial, essential form [*substanziale Wesensform*]!

But Thomas himself says that the "intellectual principle" is "the form of man"! "We must assert that the *intellect, which is the principle of the intellectual operation, is the form of the human body*."[9] In the same context, he then speaks again about the anima: "For the soul is the primary principle of our nourishment, sensation, and local movement; and likewise of our understanding. Therefore this principle by which we primarily understand, *whether it be called the intellect or the intellectual soul, is the form of the body*." One cannot simply pass over such a sentence. Thomas did not intend here to design man or construct him on the basis of a single power. Instead, he sought to interpret the entire thematic of human existence on the basis of being itself "through" the intellectus capax entis, and indeed not on the basis of a fixed a priori ideality of being's infinite simplicity, but on the basis of the *difference* of being from concrete subsistence, which is revealed in its concrete subsistence in man.

"For the nature of each thing is shown by its operation. Now the proper operation of man *as man* [!] is to understand (*intelligere*); because he thereby surpasses all other animals."[10] The act of reason concerns man as a whole, precisely because it is in him that being's movement into subsistence becomes deliberate and explicit [*thematisch wird*], and this theme shows itself in every realm of human existence, which is why Thomas can say, "It is more properly said that *man* understands through the soul."[11] The whole man therefore belongs in the basic enactment of being's movement of finitization, which the anima intellectiva has always already opened up (out of which opening the concrete subsistence of man comes into its own [*sich ereignet*] in the propria operatio hominis *inquantum est homo*): "For one and the same essential form makes man an actual being, a body, a living being, an animal, and a man."[12]

We said that the foregrasp out toward being does not have to occur anew at every moment, but rather, man, in his personal existence into being, has always already appropriated the ontological difference as the basic form of his enactment of existence. His knowledge is a transition from potency to act, even though the anima is originally taken into the crisis of being and comes to itself on the basis of being as being. The movement of finitization that "begins" from out of this crisis is the ground in which the self-enactment of finite reason has its roots. What thus opens up to man in the intellect is therefore always "himself." Reason stands so originally in the act of the decision of the ontological difference that Thomas can refer to "*the intellect by which man is what he is*"[13] and say that "the intellect is the form *of this* man."[14]

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[9] *ST* 1.76.1.

[10] *ST* 1.76.1.

[11] *ST* 1.75.2.2.

[12] *ST* 1.76.6.1.

What has come to expression here is of course distorted if we substitute the word "thinking" for "intellectus." "Man is what he is on the basis of the intellect" means: on the basis of what reason originally opens up as its basic form and into which it is always already opened up as reason. The movement of finitization as the focal point of reason "*is*" the concretely subsisting man. Therefore thinking is also "the proper operation of man as man ... and what distinguishes him from all other things."[15]

Man can be unfolded out of the always already concrete a priori plan of ontological participation as totum potestativum because and insofar as the focal point of the ultimate mediation of a priority and a posteriority "*is*" in being's self-communication. Because this unfolding begins originally in the crisis of being, therefore the corporeal dimension, man's bodily nature can also be speculatively unfolded precisely on the basis of the reason that apprehends being (!), insofar as the nonessential dimension of matter, as the ultimate seal of being's exinanitio, results in the variety and multiplicity of the finite. In matter, being reveals an unexpected depth as the likeness of divine goodness, and bears witness therein to its "transnihilation" and nihilation as ontological hypostasis! Therefore Thomas says, "being itself is compared to life and other such things as what is participated in ... and indeed being is prior to and more simple than life and other such things, and is compared to them as their *act*."[16] If we therefore speak of reason as *forma hominis*, then what we mean by this is not that an accident determines and establishes man's substance. It has nothing to do with an intellectualizing of the embodied spirit, which nevertheless also happens to possess, as they say, "vegetative" and "sensitive" powers. To the contrary, *the anima is interpreted in its onto-logical ground by the propria operatio hominis originally in all its dimensions*, as we will show later again in the presentation of the ever more profound reception of being within the cosmic order, according to the basic outline [*Grundriß*] of being's movement of finitization.

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[13] *Met.* 1.1.2.

[14] *Comp. theol.* 85.

[15] *Met.* 1.1.3.

[16] *Div. nom.* 5.1.

To be sure, we once again run up against the great temptation to carry out the unfolding of man's essence from the movement into subsistence qua "movement" and fail to pay attention to the fact that, prior to every speculative explication, man is always already historically and concretely there, that the event of the theme that is allocated to him is not originally and authentically determined in a vertical direction out of ideality into its factical Dasein as "ad-vent," but instead this theme "comes toward" ["*zukommt*"] man in history; we might say that it "comes out to meet him" in the here and now. Thus the metaphysical a priority of man's self-enactment, which springs from the act of being, is not at all neutralized or dissolved. To the contrary, the a priority proves its legitimacy solely in the fact that, by virtue of its historical enactment, it bears witness to the act of being that doesn't cling to itself and to being's transnihilation, that is, to its exinanitio in the historical course of thinking. This crisis of the a priori theme of human existence in the a posteriori of historicity is the "revelation" and confirmation of the fact that being itself has handed itself "through" the ontological difference over to man as its original model, without man being able to objectify or transpose this theme to some place beyond his historical existence. This points to the truth, according to which man unveils himself as the focal point of being's movement of finitization, a movement that is revealed to spirit: hic et nunc! Just as the "beginning" in being can never be recuperated in reflection, so too is being the "beginning" in what has already been given in what is historically prior [*der "Anfang" im geschichtlich vorweg Gegebenen!*]!

Our endeavor can easily lead us to the temptation to dissolve the entire essence of man into a pure operation [*in einen reinen Vollzug*] on the basis of thinking, just as we ran the risk of retracting the ontological moments of reality, ideality, and bonicity at the "end" of the movement into subsistence once again back into the individual phases of the field of interpretation. But we will no longer succumb to this danger if we keep in mind everything that the various temptations have taught us. Even though reason, which draws its sustenance from the crisis of being, is that *a quo homo est id quod est,*[17] it becomes evident precisely therein that man carries out the theme of being's finitization in his concrete subsistence. The resources for this thematic arise from his origins, and therefore the unfolding of the ontological moments of reality, ideality, and bonicity becomes manifest in the procession of the faculties from the human anima. We will come back to this point later. It isn't possible to translate the whole of our endeavor into the question, How may we interpret man's essence on the basis of thinking? This effort would have to proceed entirely in vain if it sought to interpret man's essence out of the "movement" of a being that "comes to itself," without realizing that the truth that being does not cling to itself prior to its kenosis, and thus can never be grasped simply by negating [*Vernichtung*] and sublating this self-withholding is precisely what posits the "decision" of this enactment. That would imply that human existence could be perfectly recuperated conceptually in the actus secundi of thought.

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[17] *Met.* 1.1.2.

We are now in a position to explain and overcome this possible misunderstanding, and we shall attempt to unfold man's essence ontologically as the "normative pattern" of being's movement of finitization. Now, because man's nature opens up in the light of his *propria operatio*, and this in turn is thinking, it follows that to interpret the human act of thinking is at the same time to illuminate man's essence; our endeavor has its roots in the following sentence: "Intellectus est forma *huius* hominis."[18]

D. Being's Movement of Finitization as the Basic Form of the Self-Constitution of the Reason "Which Makes Man What He Is"

Being cannot finitize itself "on its own" ["*von sich aus*"]; it finitizes itself in obedience to the necessary sense of being. This listening obedience [*Hörigkeit*], however, does not turn being into a potency, but rather being itself "is" this obedience [*Gehorsam*] of the exinanitio.

Only fullness gives everything! If the "to be" were substantialized, it would have no power "on its own" in the crisis to bring beings into consonance with and correspondence to one another, for, if being is substantialized (!), it itself dwindles into a res and loses all of its unifying power. The light of being gets eclipsed in the impenetrable particularity of the factical res.

Thus it is precisely the nonsubsistence of the "to be" that unveils its unifying power, by which it is able to gather all things together and arrange them in consonance with each other. But the nonsubsistence of being as being is the ultimate witness of its superessential fullness: as the likeness of the divine goodness. The convertibility of being and "nothing" in the crisis occurs originally out of the power of the "spirit." But this does not mean that, prior to the spirit's "intervention" ["*Eingreifen*"], being would resist its self-exchange for the "nothing," so that spirit would be required, in a resolve to grant consonance and correspondence, to lead being into the judgment of its nonsubsistence and to redeem being by taking it up into the positivity of love. If we recall that the anima humana is originally constituted "for this"—namely, to make possible the correspondence and consonance of beings, insofar as the source grants it the power to enter into consonance with all beings—then we will understand what it means to say that thinking and being must be in a certain sense "*the same*."

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[18] *Comp. theol.* 1.85.

Because being in the crisis is not in itself the "object of love," thinking is always already the thinking of man as he exists concretely and historically, and it is therefore impossible to identify this thinking with being. But precisely the impossibility of this identification unveils the truth that reason has always already been with being and never begins to enact itself "outside of" being! Such a constellation would take being in the crisis for granted as something that is bound to itself and clings to itself. The impossibility of the absolute coincidence of human thinking with being is thus the condition of possibility of the original belonging together of being and man. Thinking is never able to mediate the crisis to being in ideality in the sense that it drives logicized being into concretion and thus is able to grant the truth of the consonance of all beings from the unifying root of the origin. In this sense, one cannot say that thinking and being are "the same." Nevertheless, thinking originally belongs together with being in a self-sameness that man has to undergo as "*his essence*": through the decision of his belonging together with being, "in" the impossibility of identification by means of the enactment of the ontological difference. Reason is nothing other than the faculty for precisely this crisis of being, to such an extent in fact that thinking thereby experiences its radical, historical dependency [*Angewiesenheit*] as finite thinking.[19] Because reason stands originally in this crisis, it is also fundamentally attuned [*durchstimmt*] by the transnihilation of being, which opens itself in the spirit to the ontological difference—not in the sense of a "spiritual medium" ["*Medium des Geistes*"] separate from being, but rather as the spirit itself in obedience to the necessary sense of being.

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[19] Cf. L.-B. Geiger: "To discover being is at the same time to discover the nature of the intelligence that knows it. It is to climb back up to the structures of the nature that we exercise the very moment in which we claim to place them before our vision as objects." *La participation*, 356.

The transnihilation nevertheless aims at the concrete res, which derives its name from the entity's essence. By virtue of its origins in the crisis of being, reason has to strive after the *apprehendere* of the essence, insofar as the rhythm of the spirit's self-enactment is directed to the positive reality in the pull of transnihilation. Thus the first act of reason has to aim, from its roots, at the quidditas rei.

But reason has not left being's crisis behind itself in the experience of being's kenosis. It does not proceed in a linear, deductive fashion from the "apprehension" of being as being to the grasping of the essence in such a way that it would be able to determine and objectify the procession—that is, the positing of the essence out of being—in order in this way to grasp everything that belongs to the essence in a single apprehension. The absolutized reality—that is, the simple apprehension of the quiddity in the "medium" of this reality—is not something left over for reason. The positive reality has the indelible seal of its origin in itself: being is not swallowed up in the essence. Embodied reason therefore cannot exhaust itself in its *prima operatio*, or otherwise it would perceive the entity on the basis of its essence, as it always already is, and set up its perfection in the realm of the absolute essential past [*absoluten Gewesen*]. Dasein would thus "grow old," but to do so would already presuppose that reason could conceptualize being from the crisis all the way to the incalculable facticity of the res and to logicize being's super-essentiality. As we have already shown, this speculative a priori subjects the spirit to absolute dissipation in the dimension of sensible reality. The movement of finitization, which is presented in the procession and the positing of the essence as the primal division of being [*Seins-ur-teil*, the judgment of existence], collapses in this case into opaque facticity, and the necessary sense of being is annulled. Thought in terms of ontological spatiotemporality, the error of a *simplex apprehensio* that is isolated in itself is unveiled as the absolutizing of the ontological distance of the "pure future" (hypostasis of being) and the "pure past"—that is, as the dissolution of the "ontological present"—in which and through which the procession of the accidents and of the appearance was manifest.

If we think through this aberration further, we come to see that such an approach is identical with the negation of being's exinanitio, which is why all thinking that gets stuck in one way or another in the ontological vacillation has to reject the progress of reason beyond the *simplex apprehensio*—that is, back into the onto-logical difference—in which return the line of vision falls in turn on being and comes to completion in the judgment.

If reason nevertheless has secured the speculative beginning for itself through the substantializing of the being from which all essences spring, then it holds sway over all essences from this vantage and is able to determine the "essential differences." The embodied anima turns into "pure spirit"; by means of the self-withholding being that it originally communicates to corporeal matter, the anima hardens into "pure spirit" and holds itself apart, in metaphysical stinginess, from the dimension of bodiliness. We already see where this is leading! If the embodied reason gets imprisoned in the absolute grasping of the quiddities, then this "concept" is perfectly undecided, since on the one hand the event of the spirit's concrete subsistence in the body is dissolved, and on the other the quiddity, which is detached from the crisis of being, is no longer sublated into the concrete subsistence of being.

It is then only just if reason, in its self-enactment of being's movement of finitization, opens itself up beyond the dimension of reality (determined out of being's nonsubsistence) into the crisis of being "out" of which the reality is posited. Reason ultimately possesses the certainty of its cognitional act not merely as a result of the dimension of reality, but as a result of being's superessentiality, that is, on the basis of the necessary sense of being that has its seal in the ratio boni (!). The grasping of the quiddity thus comes to completion only if the necessary sense of being comes into play.

This sense, however, is revealed in the good (the ontological present!) through the substance's procession into the accidents and its self-communication to them. The concrete subsistence of being is sealed in the innermost heart of the good, in which the possible essentiell fixing of being, whether it be in ideality or in reality, is overcome. Just as the reason that is obedient to the necessary sense of being is, as ratio, always already *in via* amid the variety and multiplicity of beings, the path wherein bonitas has its seal (cf. Part A, chap. V.3.B.ii, this volume), so too the necessary sense of being opens reason up to the essence of the concrete entity only in and among the multiplicity of the accidents, in which the concrete subsistence of being reveals itself and in relation to which the dimension of the accidents—that is, of the appearance as "undetermined"—shows itself. But what unveils itself in this undeterminedness is the fact that the embodied spirit does not grasp the essence in the simple apprehension; instead, it grasps the essence solely along the path of that act according to which the apprehended essence is mediated by being's self-affirmation in the concrete individuation! For the existing essence does not abide in some place beyond the appearance; the substance claims itself in the accidents and is in turn co-affirmed in them, even though this is not in any respect a mere extension of the essence into the dimension of the accidents (cf. Part A, chap. VI.4, this volume). In *this* (!) sense, being is the *appearing essence*. Being, which subsists concretely through, in, and with the essence, breaks the essence open to the ontological present (bonum).

But because being is "*given*" in this moment of the transcendental enactment of the movement of finitization, and indeed is given in its full self-affirmation "out" of reality and ideality, the simplex apprehensio of the essence is brought to crisis in reason's affirmation or denial. The will, as the faculty ordered to precisely this *bonum in re*, comes forth in this affirmation or denial. One can therefore say that the "pure" human spirit's absolutized simple apprehension simultaneously fixes being in the crisis of ideality, rejects the transnihilation through to concrete subsistence, and therefore fails to allow the theme of the movement of finitization to come to its legitimate end. Indeed, the simplex apprehensio of the essence, if it is isolated in itself, eclipses the essence itself, for it implies the hypostasizing of being in the vacillation and thus suspends being in indecisiveness regarding the resolution of the movement into subsistence. In this case, therefore, no "*yes*" or "*no*" is clearly uttered, and so the contradiction of the "Yes and No at once" is posited. Whenever the reality, and the essence posited in it, are separated and posited over against being, being falls into the ambiguous indecision of the vacillation. The simple apprehension directed to the entity's essence thus gets eliminated.

Reason's simple apprehension, which is directed to the essence, therefore bears witness to itself in the fact that reason, in the enactment of being's movement of finitization, makes being's self-affirmation explicit, from which the positing of the essence springs. This can occur only in such a way that reason sets forth being's self-affirmation in the phases of the movement of finitization in the sense of the primal division of being/judgment of existence [*des Seins-ur-teils*]. In this primal division of being/judgment of existence, what is at issue is a divisio and compositio. Being is nevertheless always already positive reality prior to either of these. The division and the composition occur in the rhythm of being's movement of finitization. To be sure, reason opens being as being up in the ontological difference and receives the essence into its view by virtue of the light of being, but it does so only in such a way that, in this view, it accepts being's transnihilation through to concrete subsistence thinkingly, which means thankingly, and affirms being's confluence out of ideality and reality in the speculative composition. Therefore the first act of reason aims at a second act, wherein knowledge comes to completion: the *judgment*.

In the simple apprehension directed to the essence, there cannot yet be a yes or no pronounced over the positing of the reality—that is, over the essence that has been grasped—with respect to its intelligible content. Being's movement of finitization, as the fundamental theme of man's self-enactment, first comes to completion in the subsistent decisiveness of the bonum, in which being comes to decision and is affirmed out of its self-exchange for the "nothing," for the bonum does not add any negation to being (cf. *De ver.* 1.1). The judgment is thus carried out in this speculative dimension: "the operation of the intellect ... according to which it composes and divides through affirmation and negation."[20]

With this speculative unfolding, we have hit on precisely what Thomas has in mind when he says, "Since there are two operations of the intellect ... the first operation *concerns the quiddity of the thing*, while the second *concerns its being* [esse]"[21]—indeed, the secunda operatio "*comprehendit esse*."[22] This is how man grasps being in the sense of the judgment of existence! Being itself can be apprehended only as love. Its self-enactment coincides with this judgment of existence. If human reason sought to acquire the essentiality purely for its own sake in the simple apprehensio, then it would arrogate the crisis of being to itself and would fall victim to all the consequences we have already laid out in this regard. We also see that the great temptations that we encountered in the first part of our work now become determinative in a wholly concrete way for man's factical existence.

Because the essence does not possess its unity through participation, but, as Thomas says, through itself, thinking is constantly tempted not to shoulder the burden of the radicality of the primal division of being/judgment of existence and instead to remain with the simple grasping of the essentiality, or as "pure spirit" to withdraw into itself out of the kenosis in concrete embodied subsistence.

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[20] *De ver.* 14.1.

[21] 1 *Sent.* 19.5.1.7.

[22] 1 *Sent.* 38.1.3.

The judgment is already implied in the simple vision of the essentiality, insofar as the positing of the essence—that is, of the positive reality—is intelligible solely on the basis of the judgment of existence (primal division [*Ur-teilung*] of being). But, even so, the essence in its "pregivenness" with respect to being's self-communication in a certain sense is posited "next to" the enactment of the judgment of existence. This is precisely where we find the great temptation! We are nevertheless not permitted to overlook the fact that the essence has originated from being as positing, and therefore the simple apprehension directed to the essence, if it is truly grasped as "apprehensio *quidditas rei*," can never be isolated for its own sake. "Since there are two aspects in the thing, namely, *the thing's quiddity and its being, to these two aspects there corresponds a twofold operation of the intellect*."[23] This twofold operation must therefore be structured in the sense of the judgment of existence (primal division of being) according to the relationship between being and essence. The nature of the relationship between these principles, however, became evident in the movement of finitization. This movement therefore must be inscribed within the self-enactment of the embodied spirit in its origins as its proper structure of meaning [*Sinngestalt*].

Now, the proper operation of man *inquantum est homo* is thinking. But if it is human nature that is revealed in this *propria operatio*, then we have to say that man's essence cannot be anything other than the "free-standing" ["*selbst-ständige*"] focal point of the enactment of precisely this movement of finitization as judgment of existence [*Seins-urteil*]. Man therefore comes toward himself from out of his concrete subsistence as the original form of the judgment of existence. But, as is wholly apparent in the light of our exposition, what is meant here is anything but an anthropologizing of being. Quite to the contrary! Here we see that being is revealed in the fullness of its superessentiality also and precisely in relation to man's essence, insofar as man unveils himself as the focal point of the ontological difference of being.

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[23] 1 *Sent*. 38.1.3.

E. Judgment and the Movement of Finitization as the Basic Measure of Man's Essence

Man's act of knowing is thus originally inspired by the exinanitio of being as love. Reason is able to open up the things it knows as concretely given into the dimension of the ontological difference by means of a speculative "*resolutio*," in order to allow the concrete entity to come to speech [*zu Worte kommen*] "through" itself in the exercise of this act.

To be sure, the entity's coming-to-speech occurs "through" man, but man is nevertheless not its origin; otherwise, he would either have identified himself with the crisis of being or else love, which aims at the goodness that exists in things, would have been drawn back into reason, and the movement into subsistence, the event of creation, would have to be carried out exclusively "in" the subject. Thus reason allows the entity to come to speech in that which the entity always already is. It is only the emancipation of reason into the hypostasis of being that negates man's historical dependence on the factically given, which never allows itself to be "factored in" ["*einberechnen*"] to man's concrete act of knowledge. Just as man is never endowed with being as a fixum and never enters into the enactment of his existence [*Daseinsvollzug*] on the basis of the absolute security this would imply, so too what has been given and what is to come in history is never something he can circumscribe in his intellect, because, in its irreducibility and uniqueness, it originates from the unrepeatability and the singularity [*Einzigkeit*] of being itself. The impossibility of a conceptual recuperation [*reflexen Einholung*] of the crisis of being, wherein this reveals itself in its superessential fullness, is grounded in the fact that man enters into the enactment of his Dasein out of the incalculable givenness of historical existence [*Existenz*], which does not allow itself to be imprisoned in the rationally determinable essentialized-past [*Ge-wesen*] of the *simplex apprehensio*. This is the perspective from which to understand what Aquinas says here: "Our intellect is able to consider abstractedly what it knows concretely.... the created intellect is naturally capable of apprehending *the concrete form, and the concrete being* (*esse*) abstractedly, by way of a kind of resolution of parts."[24]

Now, this means that the act of the apprehending intellect is the operation proper to man and "follows upon" man's being: "the mode of action in every agent follows from its mode of existence."[25] With this twofold view, which looks toward the concrete entity and then also at the subsisting man, what comes to light is thus at bottom "the same." If the twofold operation of reason originally follows from the relationship of the principles in the span of the movement of finitization, but if what unveils itself therein is at the same time man's essence, since the "intellectus [is] forma *huius* hominis,"[26] or "a quo homo est id quod est,"[27] then we have to say the following: *In the judgment of existence, man enacts his proper essence as the fundamental form of the cosmos in all the dimensions of its existence*, so that the ever deeper reception of being in the order of beings, out of being's movement of finitization, is gathered together and expressed in him.

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[24] *ST* 1.12.4.3.

But let us return once again to the unfolding of the form of judgment!

In the simple apprehension, which aims at the entity's essence, nothing has yet been decided regarding the fullness of the quiddity. The apprehensio comes to rest "pro-visionally" ["*vor-läufig*"] in the positive reality. To be sure, the positing of the res has never negated being's transnihilation in such a way that the judgment of existence would be subsumed in the always already enduring unity of the principles, in the moment of reality. Thus the judgment is also implied in the grasping of the quiddity; indeed, the embodied spirit's *simplex apprehensio* draws its sustenance from this implication of the judgment! But reason cannot deduce the essences from the undecidedness of the crisis of being: "Because the essences of things are unknown to us."[28]

We see that man goes astray in this pseudo-speculative unfolding of hypostasized being also in himself, if he withdraws himself from obedience to the transnihilation of being in the spirit.

It also becomes evident here that the movement of finitization is inseparably connected to the history of man, indeed, that the temptations that arise here are undergone in human history as its most original theme. The act of judgment is thus in a paradigmatic way the act of man's essence itself.

But what inspired the movement of finitization was the necessary sense of being, being's ratio boni. This ratio is the sole legitimate point of reference for the transcendental unfolding of being. Therefore nothing is said with the separating and composing of being "by" ["*durch*"] reason if this separation and composition is related exclusively to the ontological moments of reality and ideality! In other words, the separating and the "subsequent" positing of being in reason do not terminate in the pure reality, but rather, following the pull of the movement of finitization, which has its center in the good, go beyond ideality and reality and arrive at the moment of bonicity. It is the will, however, that aims at the goodness.[29]

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[25] *ST* 1.89.1.

[26] *Comp. theol.* 85.

[27] *Met.* 1.1.2.

[28] *De ver.* 10.1.

But if the crisis of being becomes explicit in the spirit, then in reason's movement beyond the positive reality in its judgment of existence, the power [*das Vermögen*] that is ordered to the crisis of being (reason) must bring its act to decision in the will to the extent that the will strives for the good. Just as embodied reason draws its sustenance from the crisis of being and thus (awakened by the light of being) brings all beings into consonance with one another, without ever being able to perceive being as being, so too does the will stretch out toward the *bonum in universale*, but in such a way that it aims at this precisely in its incalculable, historical facticity. Indeed, it is the seal of nothing other than the "arrival of the a priori," in which man has always already been involved [*eingenommen*] in the a posteriori of concrete historicity, insofar as man, in willing the good that is in things, makes a decision concerning the impossibility of deducing the factically given from the ideal vacillation of being! We thus gradually begin to see how it is possible to determine man's powers speculatively in the enactment of the primal division of being/the judgment of existence.

But let us now enter further into the pull of the subject matter!

The entire dimension of the ontological difference is not yet explicitly enacted in the *simplex apprehensio*. It is only in judgment that man "posits" the entity in a complete way on the basis of the movement into subsistence. But because the totality of this movement comes to completion in the ontological moment of the good, it follows that this positing of the entity in judgment is always already co-decided through the act of the will, which comes to completion in love. Love determines the degree of the intensity to which man roots the known truth in being in the Yes or No. Thus knowledge comes to its fulfillment in love, even though it is first of all reason, in the disclosure of the crisis of being, that enables the will to pull through to the concrete subsistence.

The "positing" of the entity therefore occurs "through" man, insofar as he humanizes things in his thinking, as an enactment of being's movement of finitization, and returns at the same time back to his own essence in the same movement. There is no violation of the entity here, since reason, in its true act, bears witness to the kenosis of being in lovingly letting beings be. Thus what comes to ultimate expression only in love is the fact that reason has apprehended being as the likeness of divine goodness, that a decision has always already been made regarding the positivity of being, that the truth is always already itself prior to every Yes "and" No on the plane of contradiction, and that the ambiguity and undeterminedness of the vacillation of being is not the speculative beginning, but a decision has always been made regarding Yes or No out of being as love: "the intellect judges about the thing it has apprehended at the moment when it says that something is or is not, which is the act of the intellect in its composing and dividing."[30] In the same way, the simple apprehension of reason as *quidditative formatio*[31] can be understood only if reason submits itself to the judgment of ecstatic [*auskehrende*] love. Thus "Since in any given thing there is a distinction between the *quiddity of the thing and its esse*, there are, correspondingly, two operations of the intellect. One ... is the formation [of the concept] by which the intellect apprehends the quidditas of things, ... and the other is that by which it *comprehends the esse of the thing, by composing the affirmation*."[32]

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[29] "The name 'good' therefore expresses the correspondence of being to the appetite" (*De ver.* 1.1).

What therefore becomes evident along the path that reason follows here is that it never receives being as being, even though it is taken up, from its very origins, into the luminous night of the crisis of being. The principle of knowledge belongs to reason's simple apprehension, the first act of which presents a "formation of the quiddity of the entity." But this dependence on the perception of the quiddity comes to completion in the judgment, at which knowledge also aims, just as the opening of the crisis of being is, to be sure, the principle of man's ontological self-exhibition, but comes to completion only in the radical enactment of being's movement of finitization.

Knowledge reaches its completion in the judgment: "In all knowledge two factors must be taken into account: the beginning and the end. Knowledge begins with apprehension but it ends with judgment, for it is there that knowledge is completed."[33] Thus Thomas can say, "The human intellect must of necessity understand by composition and division."[34]

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[30] *De ver.* 1.3.

[31] 1 *Sent.* 19.5.1.7.

[32] 1 *Sent.* 38.1.3 and 1 *Sent.* 19.5.1.7; cf. *In de Trinit.* 5.3.

[33] *In de Trinit.* 6.2.

[34] *ST* 1.85.5.

This speculative dimension of man's self-exhibition as the subsisting focal point of the judgment of existence in the movement of finitization allows us also to understand a passage from Nicholas of Cusa: "Our mind has co-created its own judgment, without which we would not be able to accomplish anything. This power of judgment is co-created as natural to the mind,"[35] and because man is the focal point of the judgment of existence in the movement of finitization, wherein the basic form of creation comes to light, Cusanus is able to say: "In humanity, all things are therefore explicated in a human way, for *it exists as a human world*. Ultimately, all things are concentrated in man in a human way, for *he is a human god*.... Just as humanity is able to progress in a human way into all things, so too is the universe able to progress in itself; ... But he reflects all things in himself ... and in this way man approaches *deiformity*."[36] "A likeness of creation shines forth in every act of an intellectual nature."[37]

F. The Anima as Forma Corporis and Reason as *Apprehensivus Entis*

Let us inquire further into what sorts of things the beings are that human reason apprehends. It is evident that reason's thoughtful grasp aims at the quiddity of the corporeal entity. "The first and proper object of human reason is the quiddity or nature that exists in corporeal matter."[38] *Apud nos non subsistunt nisi composita*[39] (*ex materia et forma*). These passages do not contradict the claim: "In the first operation of the intellect the first thing that falls into the conception of the intellect is what I call *ens*."[40]

Indeed, Thomas says that the ens is "conceived"[41] by reason and the *concipere* is an *apprehendere of the ens*.[42] The ens is *objectum intellectus*,[43] *intellectus est apprehensivus entis*,[44] and then he says again: "But it first apprehends something about its object, such as its quiddity, and this is its first and proper object."[45] "The first object of our intellect, in this state of life, is not every being and everything true, but 'being' and 'true,' as considered in material things."[46]

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[35] *De mente*. IV.
[36] *De coniecturis* II, XIV.
[37] Homily (1457) CCLXXIX, 670; cf. *Beryl*. VI, 268, cited by Gandillac, 193.
[38] *ST* 1.84.7.
[39] *ST* 1.3.3.1.
[40] *Met*. 4.6.10.
[41] *De ver*. 1.1.
[42] *ST* 1–2.94.2.
[43] *ST* 1.55.1.
[44] *ST* 1.82.4.1.
[45] *ST* 1.85.5.

Our task in the following is to unfold this truth and to do so in the terms of what disclosed itself to us as the ultimate ground of our entire speculative elaboration: being's movement of finitization, which occurs in accordance with the ontological difference that is its fundamental measure.

It particularly struck us and provoked our special attention that, in *De veritate* 1.1, Thomas does not designate the "pure spirit" simpliciter, or even God—that is, the essentia divina creatrix—as what accounts for the *convenientia unius ad alterum*. Instead, he points to the anima humana. And what he says about this soul is: *Nata est convenire cum omni ente.*[47] One might ask why he doesn't immediately designate the divine intellect, but instead the embodied human spirit, for the verum in the sense of the consonance of one being with others. Why doesn't he introduce here the angelic intellect, which of course possesses in itself less "materiality," and therefore potentiality, than the anima humana? Wouldn't a more fitting ground for the convenientia be found in the angelic intellect? The higher mode of being spirit, after all, always implies a higher degree of simplicity, which transcends the variety and multiplicity of the material dimension! Aren't the transcendentals all about the "modi *generaliter* consequentes omne ens," which would seem to imply that the angelic intellect, since it is capax entis to a superior degree, would in fact do more justice to the *generaliter* than the anima humana?

These questions lie at the same level as the question that imposed itself on us at the beginning of our discussion: "Why should there be in the first place an unfolding of the 'modi *generaliter* consequentes omne ens' in the enactment of being's movement of *finitization*?" We already answered that question. But now it has to be posed anew, and indeed for the following reason:

Thomas says, "The act of existing (*esse*) is related to a form as something consequent upon the form in virtue of its very nature, and not as an effect to its efficient cause, in the manner in which motion, for example, is related to the power of the thing that produces it."[48] Now, the anima intellectiva is the *forma hominis*.[49] It is capax entis by virtue of its essence, insofar as reason, *a quo homo est id quod est*,[50] is released into being in its act of perceiving. But we must pay close attention to what is being said here! Esse follows upon form in the constitution of the substance, which means that esse follows upon the form "per se" in the movement of finitization. The radicality of being's transnihilation is the condition of possibility for the communication of being to corporeal matter, and indeed so fundamentally that the embodied spirit subsists only in the unity with the matter that receives it.

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[46] *ST* 1.87.3.1.
[47] *De ver.* 1.1.
[48] *An.* 14.4.
[49] *ST* 1.76.1.
[50] *Met.* 1.1.2.

But reason stretches itself out perceptively into "this" being in its operation, by which man exists as man; that is, it stretches itself out into the being that follows upon the spirit "per se." In this sense, reason, insofar as being follows it, has always already felt its way into the crisis of the being that "follows upon" it and is therefore a priori able to make a decision concerning that which is constituted in being's movement into subsistence, namely, the various beings and, along with them, man; reason can indeed "keep open" the origin of the constitution of man and the variety of entities, and, in its openness to being, reason can let "be" both man and world at one stroke.

Here, however, man encounters an abyssal temptation! He thinks he is able to determine this act on his own in the sense that he can take hold of the crisis of being; he therefore overlooks the fact that the movement into subsistence has always already been decided upon in the enactment of the finite entity: man. It is in fact only on the basis of man's concrete subsistence that reason comes to be as a power. This is the root of the temptation that seduced man into identifying the essence of the spirit with self-consciousness, which increases along the path of the actus secundi, insofar as this root dissolves concrete subsistence into reason's act of apprehending being; projecting the beginning of man's ontological constitution into the inseity of an "empty" and an as-yet unmediated being, which corresponds to the immediate consciousness of a purely sensible awareness, in order then to mediate these two "ends" to each other through the semblance of an enactment of the movement of finitization; and elevating itself in this process as self-consciousness. We will come back to this question again later.

For now, it is important to keep in mind that the identification of spirit and self-consciousness has its roots in the fact that the embodied spirit has not been radically enacted in the judgment of being's transnihilation. The body has not yet been taken up without remainder into the concrete subsistence of human existence, which would in turn correspond to a remainder of unmediated being; this remainder, holding itself back from the exinanitio, would remain fixed, and so the spirit would withdraw from the kenosis of embodiment back into hypostasized ideality.

Now, every form has in a certain sense a "capacity for being" [*Seinsvermögende*]: "Inasmuch as the form perfects the matter by *giving* it existence, it is in a certain way diffused in it; and it returns to itself inasmuch as it has existence in itself."[51] Thus having a "capacity for being," the form pours itself out over the matter and returns to itself, it carries out its reditio to itself, insofar as it "has" being in itself.

But the embodied spirit, upon which being follows per se as it does every other form, has a "capacity for being" in a paradigmatic way, insofar as it actualizes this "following" ["*Nachfolgen*"] of being, the self-outpouring, the movement out and the return into itself, in an "*explicit and deliberate*" ["*thematisch*"] way, that is, in personal subsistence. Indeed, being's movement of finitization is appropriated to man as his explicit onto-logical theme.

But what comes to decision in this exitus (in the sense of the perfection of matter) and in the reditus (in the sense of possessing being in itself)?

The movement of intro-version and extro-version [*Einkehr und Auskehr*] is nothing other than the concrete expression of being's vertical movement into subsistence. Now, if what distinguishes spirit is that it is capax entis, then it must inform "its" matter as precisely the spirit that has a capacity for the crisis of being. The self-outpouring over the matter and spirit's return to itself make manifest the act of being's movement of finitization. But because the ontological difference is carried out in an explicit (!) way by man, then every possible outward movement of forms into matter and every possible return inward of forms to themselves are gathered together as if into a metaphysical focal point, so that, in his self-actualization, man recapitulates the entire order of the cosmos.

The multiplicity of the acts of this recapitulation, however, are determined and attuned by a single theme, namely, by the undergoing of being as unstinting love! Once again, we see that man is nothing other than the concretely subsisting focal point of being's movement of finitization in historical existence.

Being's finitization, however, has its seal in the three ontological moments of the reality, ideality, and bonicity of that which is. Therefore what springs forth from the spirit, because it has an original capacity to become the focal point of being's kenosis, which unveiled itself in an abyssal sense as the theme of creation simpliciter, is the capacity "for" these ontological moments, but in such a way that the powers proceed from the spirit as from a *forma corporis*, according to the pattern of *exitus* and *reditus*. The radical embodiment of the anima intellectiva is thus the ultimate proof and seal of the "gift/task" of being, which makes its kenosis manifest in an abyssal way in man in the sense of self-gift, but reveals itself therein at the same time as the proper "gift/task" of the cosmos: through man.

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[51] *ST* 1.14.2.1.

All the temptations that arise in being's decision of the movement of finitization thus unfold themselves in man's concrete self-actualization. He interprets his Dasein, he is historically "there" ["*Da*"], according to "the way in which" he undergoes these temptations. The response to these temptations attune and determine not only his being-in-the-world but also his relationship to God, insofar as the ontological difference never comes to decision merely in the "finite," but is originally sublated as difference in God.[52]

G. The Intellect as *Apprehensivus Entis* and the Theory of the Self-Consciousness of Spirit

Being follows upon the form, which emerges together with matter from being. But it is far too easy to interpret this *per se consequens* in the sense of making form the efficient cause of being. It is not for nothing that Thomas thus adds: "not as an effect to its efficient cause, in the manner in which motion, for example, is related to the power of the thing that produces it."[53] Although reason is able to apprehend being, it is nevertheless *not* the moving principle of the movement of finitization that it interprets insofar as being follows upon it. Reason does not have disposal over the crisis of being, for being's superessentiality is sealed in the rupturing of being's hypostasis and in its transnihilation through to the concrete res materialis, that is, in spirit's being embodied.

Being follows upon reason in the enactment of being's movement of finitization *not* in the way that the effect follows upon the efficient power of its cause. Nevertheless, reason, precisely as anima intellectiva, is the *essendi principium*.[54] There is no need to point out that there are genuine dangers hidden herein that arise when we speak of anima, anima intellectiva, and intellectus all in one breath. One cannot say that the intellect as a power is the *anima qua forma substantialis*. Nevertheless, reason as apprehensiva entis interprets and explains "by itself" ["*durch sich selbst*"] in a most profound way the *per se consequens* of being in relation to the form that is the anima. It thus appears as if the anima as forma—insofar as it is perceptive of being in a paradigmatic way—would be immediately identified with reason. Indeed, we too often imagine that the anima as such opens to itself or arrives at being—that is, "*is*" anima—only when it achieves "self-consciousness" in the reditio.

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[52] This would be something one could elaborate at greater length in the interpretation of concrete forms of life, but we have to forego this in the present context so that we may address the matter at hand.

[53] *An.* 14.4.

[54] *SCG* 2.54.

This is the origin of the temptation that too easily overcomes man when he allows the spirit's essence to have its ground in self-consciousness. In this case, the movement of finitization, which is always already superseded in the entity's concrete subsistence, is once again dissolved in the enactment of the opening of the ontological difference and that which distinguishes thinking—namely, the ability to pull the "root of being" from all existing things by means of judgment—is identified, as operatio (!), with the essence of the spirit. The theory of self-consciousness brings the movement of finitization back into the crisis of "empty being," which corresponds to mere consciousness, in the concrete operation of reason. It is therefore not obedient to being's transnihilation. Being thus gets essentialized and the movement into subsistence is not brought to decision and undergone. Being clings to itself in the crisis. This is why any metaphysics of spirit that seeks to ground the essence of spirit in self-consciousness has lost being's superessentiality and neutralized its necessary sense. It thus tends to collapse either into positivism by virtue of the always already enduring positive reality, or into idealism by virtue of being's ideal vacillation. We always have to keep in mind that reason springs from the spirit first of all in its concrete subsistence! The sophistry lies in the fact that the intellect apparently supersedes its origination from something beyond itself insofar as it stretches itself out into the "beginning" of the crisis of being. This is the source both of the possibility and of the danger of a theory of self-consciousness.[55]

If we fail to withstand the great temptations in our interpretation of being's finitization, the theory of self-consciousness will go astray. It is only when thinking keeps itself open to the necessary sense of being that reason enacts in truth its life-theme [*Lebensthema*], that the spirit becomes conscious of itself all the way to the "bottom" [*auf den "Grund"*]; but this getting-to-the-bottom-of-itself is never made possible by a being that as such has been logicized in ideality, which would allow man to achieve a complete conceptual mastery of his existence, both out of the crisis of being and also in the dimension of historical facticity. The entire theory of self-consciousness, which is supposed to reveal the essence of spirit, thus draws its sustenance from the fact that being, prior to its kenosis, clings to itself in the vacillation, so that the spirit acquires so to speak an ideal leverage point against the transnihilation of being through to concrete subsistence, in connection with which it intends to get to the bottom of itself totaliter in its existence. This hypostasized "beginning" nevertheless ushers in the detachment of man's concrete embodied reality from his spiritual existence; indeed, it implies the impossibility of the procession of the accidents (powers) from the human person by virtue of the ontological innermost heart of the good. If one starts from the speculative a priori of the ontological vacillation, one cannot attain the good! This is also why reason, as a power arising from the spirit in the sense of an accident, is no longer rooted in the concrete subsistence of human existence—or, in other words, it is no longer already superseded in its operation! This is also why we cannot say that reason, as a power that has sprung from the spirit in the sense of an accident, has already been superseded in its rootedness in the concrete subsistence of human existence, that is, that reason has already been superseded in its operation. To say this would once again incline us to fix reason in place in the crisis in its stretching itself out toward being as being, and to determine the essence of spirit first through the mediation of "empty being" to subsistence in the sense of the mediation of consciousness to self-consciousness.

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[55] Cf. A. Günther, "Der Weltanfang für die, und die Weltanfänger in der Wissenschaft," in *Euristheus und Herakles*, esp. 500*ff.*

But just as being's transnihilation (*non subsistens*) is revealed in the procession of an ultimate, self-diffusive [*zerstreuenden*] (*numerositas: bonitas!*) dimension (matter) as the enabling ground of being for the sake of its concrete subsistence, so too every false theory of self-consciousness, insofar as it has its beginning in the hypostasized being that negates its transnihilation, has a priori rejected the reception in the material ground and mastered it; in this way, such a theory has set the spirit over against the realm of nature. Matter, however, is intelligible in a speculative sense only on the basis of being's superessentiality, which manifests its ultimate depths in the ground of the good. We must now sketch this out in broad strokes.

2. Matter and the Superessentiality of Being

A. The Decision Concerning the "Entitative" Character of Materia Prima in Being's Exemplar Causality

Thomas says: "Being (*Ens*) implies the habitude of a formal cause only, either inherent or exemplar; and its causality does not extend save to those things which are actual."[56]

But if the causality of "to be" extends only to that which actually exists, then we are apparently left with only two alternatives for our understanding of matter, insofar as we approach it as *potentia pura realis*: Either it is not tenable as pure, real potency, or it has nothing to do with being.

If being, in its exemplar [*urbildlichen*] causality, relates only to the actually existing thing, then matter, as "pure possibility," lies entirely outside being's causality. This consequence has deep speculative implications. One might say that being does not reach "all the way down" to matter, that matter comes to lie *next to* being as pure possibility. It is being's "other." But if this were true, then in the very same moment, being's exemplar causality would be essentialized and its superessentiality would be lost. As we have already seen, however, the loss of being's superessentiality would imply the absolutizing of the posited essence in its unitas per seipsam, which now would likewise fall outside of being and would depotentiate it, reducing it to helplessness with respect to itself. If the essence is separated out from and set against being, then matter is no longer related to being as an essentiell determination of the concrete substance, and being is no longer able to allow either the enabling ground of matter or form to proceed from itself.

At bottom, this speculative train of thought derives from the essentializing of being. Being is either wholly and completely abandoned to its transnihilation, since the material res takes the speculative regard prisoner by virtue of the absolutized positing of the essence, or being gets hypostasized in a pseudo-ideality segregated from matter. The hypostasizing likewise implies an exclusive relationship of being to that which always already exists *actu*; it prolongs itself as an actuality that absolutely "has been."

The superessentiality of being thus turns out to be determinative in a paradigmatic sense for the speculative interpretation of matter. We therefore raise the question: Is it not only when we grasp the superessentiality of being's exemplar causality on the basis of the abyss of bonitas that we are able to determine the relation of matter, in its nonactuality, to being in a speculative way?

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[56] *ST* 1.5.2.2.

Let us attempt to penetrate this more deeply! In our discussion of the relationship between "participation and causality," we saw that being does not possess causality as being. It is also not an *efficiens*, since, as such, it would be hypostasized in the ideal vacillation. *Esse absolute praeintelligitur causae.*[57] If this were not the case, then all causality would in fact be eliminated. The first cause would no longer be God but rather being as the absolute contradiction in ideality; this "duplicate god" would thus cause and mediate both the finite and the infinite. This is something we have already discussed at great length. Yet it is *not* the case that being caused by another is ascribed to being insofar as it is being, or otherwise all being would be caused by another.[58]

Being's exemplar causality can thus never be understood in the sense of a vacillation of being, which clings to itself and so holds itself apart from matter; otherwise, being would be the cause of God and the creature as the substantialized middle between them, and it would thus collapse into the absolute whirl of being caused. The de-hypostasizing of being in ideality in the sense of transnihilation and kenosis thus reveals being's uncaused character *as being*, and shows that it is God's absolute positivity that keeps us from grasping being itself as efficient causality in the sphere of ideality.

This presents something decisive for the metaphysical illumination of materia prima! The exemplar causality of being and the special imprint of being's uncaused character (inquantum est ens), which is unveiled in it, cannot be contemplated in isolation from being's bonitas, which ignites the movement of finitization, otherwise the materia prima, as potentia pura realis, would have to fall altogether outside of exemplar causality, since exemplar causality extends only *ad ea quae sunt actu*.

But doesn't Thomas himself say that nothing can be external to being apart from nonbeing, and that this nonbeing is neither form nor matter?[59] Does materia prima thus have a "to be"? Is this "to be" not the same as *actu esse*? Doesn't *ens in potentia* simply mean that the materia prima has "*to be*" pure potency, so that it can receive form? Isn't it altogether necessary to pre-

[57] *ST* 1.13.11.2.

[58] Cf. *SCG* 2.52.

[59] *De pot.* 7.2.9.

suppose matter as *ens*, because the form does not give to be in the sense of an efficient cause and matter is supposed to "receive" form? Does it not then need to be grasped as an *ens*—for the sake of its potentiality in relation to form? These questions come to decision once again from out of the convertibility of being and "nothing" and are interpretable from within the context of exemplar causality and the kenosis of being as being.

Matter and form are determinations of the essence, and as such we can say of both that they proceed from being. But the essence is not actu, unless one looks immediately at the fusing of the essence with esse in the moment of the always already enduring reality. Then, to be sure, the essence is always already actu, and along with it so is matter as a determination of essence. If being's transnihilation is thus overemphasized, and esse absorbed into the res, then matter acquires an "entitative character," insofar as the reality of being is absolutized and made into a dimension of the speculative interpretation of being simpliciter. We find just this in Suarez. But because the overemphasis of the posited *essentia realis* implies the explicitness of being in ideality in the sense of the univocal *ens indifferens*, the speculative beginning in the explicit ideality of the *esse completum et simplex* likewise leads to a conception of matter that can interpret the potentia pura only in the sense of a "potential entity." This is something we find in Duns Scotus.[60] For the pseudo-subsisting being is also "always already" actual, and so are all the essences in their *possibile esse* along with it. The essences no longer need to proceed from being, but rather being perfects the essence, which is always already possible in itself, by conveying it to its factical reality. Esse degenerates into the res, which presents itself as the flip side of the overemphasized transnihilation of being. The weight of the positive res thus drags the nonessential matter as *nec quid, nec quale* into the essence and makes matter into an *essentia inchohata per modum potentiae*. Matter is "always already actual" in the medium of reality. Though we wish only to indicate this in passing, it is here that we find the metaphysical roots of the modern conception of matter, particularly in the realm of the natural sciences.

The exemplarity of being, which is isolated in itself and separated from the necessary ontological sense of the kenosis, the causality of which extends only to what is actual, also aims at the materia prima *in actu*—the exemplarity of being, if it is misunderstood, reveals itself to thinking as a *causalitas for-*

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[60] Cf. Ulrich, *Inwiefern ist die Konstruktion*, chaps. I (Suarez) and II (Scotus).

malis vel inhaerentis that knows no (!) transnihilation of being, but only the extension of the paradigm into the things that exist. But if, by contrast, this exemplarity of being in its infinite simplicity gets lost, then being is annulled as "pure mediation" and being itself turns into the absolute cause, which produces everything out of itself without exception, in the space of the contradiction. The speculative connection between the exemplarity and the kenosis of being unveils its ultimate depths in the metaphysical interpretation of matter. The absolutizing of exemplarity in the sense of a hypostasized exemplarism takes matter as something entitative, but the absolutized transnihilation of being binds matter to the always already actually enduring reality. It is only the unity of exemplarity and transnihilation, which is revealed in the convertibility of being and "nothing," that makes possible a speculative interpretation of matter as *potentia pura realis*.

We thus see the proper place to begin a speculative unfolding of matter and where the decisions have to be made a priori concerning what we understand by "matter" in every case. We should in any event not carelessly apply a ready-made solution to the monstrous temptations that lie in this arena. But let us move onward!

B. Materia Prima and the Necessary Sense of Being

If we lose sight of being's superessentiality, then matter acquires an entitative character. We are convinced that only the speculative interpretation of being as the likeness of God's goodness makes possible an adequate determination of matter. This can be seen in the following way:

If being in the crisis is ordered simply to the essence from its origin, if this relation is, in other words, constitutive for being, then being founders in the essence. We therefore said that creation does not aim immediately at the positive positing of the particular reality, but rather at the *emanatio totius esse*. It is precisely from this perspective that we are able to interpret the original weight of this positive reality. But if creation in this sense, as *emanatio totius esse*, does not intend the positive reality of being in an immediate way and so in a way that leaps over the crisis of being, then being is thus not immediately and simply related to the pure essence. The *emanatio totius esse*, as it were, holds space open for the procession of an enabling dimension that is not determined according to the essence, even though the procession of this nonessential enabling dimension of being to its concrete subsistence is not the only thing that makes manifest being's superessentiality! Being's subsistence in the pure essence—that is, in pure spirit—also springs from the superessentiality of participated being. Nevertheless, being would not have become manifest in its "ultimate" superessentiality if it came to subsistence only in the pure spirit, since love intends the variety and multiplicity of beings, which result from the total self-gift of being, from the emanatio *totius* esse. Thus, God's love, which becomes manifest in the kenosis of being itself, is sealed in a profoundly mysterious way in matter's procession from being. Thomas therefore says: "Even though the spiritual substance is of a higher rank than corporeal substance, nevertheless a world in which there were only spiritual substances would not be better, but more imperfect."[61]

Matter is thus in an abyssal way the revelation of the superessentiality of the "to be," which can never be substantialized. Ultimately, to hypostasize being is to negate the enabling dimension of matter, because the hypostasis has always already preempted being's transnihilation. The preemption of the transnihilation is deposited in the entitative character of matter. Because in this case matter is always already actual, it so to speak justifies being's holding itself back in ideality. But in that same moment, being is transposed entirely into the subject, which now in a certain way makes manifest the superessentiality of the "to be," insofar as it leads the "to be" into contradiction, that is, reveals it as "nothing" (non subsistens). Reason itself takes over the revelation of being as "love." Therefore being has turned into a potency that is capable of receiving determination in relation to its mediation to subsistence, precisely at that moment in which it rejects the procession of the enabling ground of its most profound kenosis and "poverty," wherein the revelation of its absolute wealth comes to light. Because the convertibility of being and "nothing" keeps superessential being from being substantialized, being is not originally established as ordered to the essence as its sole enabling ground. Instead, it is able, from its origins, to release from itself a "nonessential" enabling ground,[62] insofar as *agens agit sibi simili*.[63] The speculative elucidation of the question of matter stands and falls with the proper interpretation of this sentence.

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[61] *SCG* 3.136.

[62] Siewerth says something similar: "Just as the act of pure being transcends everything having to do with essence, so too it does not exhaust its 'potency-for-concrete-existence' in the forms and substances that spring from it, which allow finite being to appear in an immediate way and which bear its 'name.' There is therefore an unnamable something that lies beyond all formal distinctions and determinations. This last thing to spring from being, this fall from and deficit of actuality, converges in a distinctionless way into a single, unified reality [*einem Einigen*], which indicates at the same time an ultimate diffusion and externality." See *Der Mensch und sein Leib*, 47.

[63] *De pot.* 7.2.3.

If we read the sentence as saying that being is understood as a substantiell efficient cause [*ein substaniell Wirkendes*], then our interpretation of the proposition has completely gone astray, for being, as "agens," is already substantialized and set up against its transnihilation. Let us recall that being does not cause matter by itself in the manner of an agens: "Non importat habitudinem causae nisi formalis ... vel inhaerentis ... vel exemplaris."[64] We thus see how precisely this sentence, which previously we thought annulled materia prima as pure, real possibility, has its unalienable place in the speculative illumination of matter.

If matter is supposed to be a "simile" of superessential being, then we have to ask after that to which its striving is directed, since "nothing desires except what is similar to itself."

It is absolutely clear that the appetere cannot be directed to the pseudo-subsistence of being. If, therefore, being is meant to bring about a likeness in the dimension of its "potency-for-concrete-existence" ["*Daseinsmöglichkeit*"], then this similarity can be related only to the transnihilation of being through to the infinite variety and multiplicity of entities. Being brings about this nonessential potency, which as possibility bears a likeness to its superessentiality, insofar as it shows precisely that it does not possess the resources in itself to be an "agens" but is "nothing" (*non subsistens*). But because being is revealed as love in its kenosis, matter has to be related to the ratio boni of being: "for primary matter participates in goodness as tending to it (*cum appetat ipsum*), for all seek their like."[65] Matter, as the "nonessential" enabling ground of being (in its concrete subsistence), originates wholly from the necessary sense of being, from the "ground" of being's movement of finitization. The obliteration of being's pseudo-subsistence, the impossibility of the absolute contradiction as the beginning of the unfolding of being, is sealed in a profoundly mysterious way in matter; in matter, it becomes manifest that reason can never achieve conceptual mastery of the bonitas in the resolution of the contradiction of the hypostasis of being or of "empty being." It makes manifest the fact that being never negates its exinanitio a priori, in order to be allowed to be in concreto by finite subjectivity—or, to put it in the terms of supernatural revelation, that the Logos never becomes man in rebellion against the Father, in order, by means of this exinanitio, to take hold of his glory as "something to be grasped at," but that he remains obedient to the Father all the way to the bleeding on the cross (cf. Part A, chap. IV.5, this volume).

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[64] *ST* 1.5.2.2.

[65] *ST* 1.5.2.1.

Being projects this ultimate, most profound enabling ground for itself out of superessential obedience to the necessary sense of being. Matter is therefore the pledge [*Unterpfand*] of the rupturing of the hypostasis of being. It is a "simile" of being in its "kenosis." It is the dimension in which the event of being's movement of finitization has its "nonessential capacity for concrete existence." Matter is therefore "similar" to the bonum insofar as, in it, the being that is fixed in ideality and the res that is closed in on itself in reality are overcome.

Matter is called out of the power of being's bonicity; it is the field on which both the self-withholding future of the being that refuses to give itself—the future that has already brought everything behind itself—and the foundering of being in the absolute essential past are redeemed. Matter continues to open up "a little step" forward, and destroys the essential pastness of the hypostasis of being, opening it up to hope, which holds sway as the middle of the ontological difference (cf. Part A, chap. I.1).

Thus Thomas says, "for primary matter participates in goodness as tending to it … but it does not participate in being, since it is presumed to be non-being."[66] Thus, if being remains suspended in the ideal horizon, if the necessary sense of being no longer humbles [*durchneigt*] the spirit, which draws its life from the crisis of being in the pull of being's finitization toward the finite subsistence, then, in relation to a pure causality that extends itself only to what is actu, matter, as the "other," falls outside of being: "It does not participate in being, since it is presumed to be non-being." But if, in the humbling of the kenosis, being unveils itself as bonum, indeed, as the highest likeness of divine love itself, then matter participates in the good, and it is true that nothing is external to being other than nonbeing, which neither form nor matter can be.

If it is the essence of man to have appropriated being's movement of finitization as the original task of his existence, then *matter* comes to light first of all as the dimension and the field of the temptations to disobedience with respect to the necessary sense of being, but also as the dimension and the field of the "*necessary*," the "*need-relieving*" ["*Not-wendingen*"], in which is sealed the fact that presumptuous reason is never able to hypostasize being or, in other words, the fact that being is love. This is so because the necessary sense of being comes to light in a profoundly mysterious way in matter, the sense that orders the thinking of being into finitude, for the sake of the positivity of being, the finitude in which the embodied spirit is received in precisely this matter.

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[66] *ST* 1.5.2.

It is only now that the following truth discloses itself: the sublimation of finite reason in being as such through the negation of the exinanitio—that is, the logicizing of the bonum—is the same thing as the total destruction of the material reception of the human spirit in its entire depth!

Let us now enter more deeply into this speculative interpretation of matter! Being as being bears witness to its superessentiality in the fact that its outermost and ultimate enabling ground is something other than form, something nonessential, by which form is received, in which it has stability and firm footing. Because all enabling grounds have to originate from being and proceed from it, insofar as act in every circumstance has priority over potency, the nonessential enabling ground, which corresponds to being's superessentiality, also has to proceed from it. Since the self-exchange of being for the "nothing" bears witness to its superessentiality, the likeness of matter as "potency-for-concrete-existence" [*Daseinsmöglichkeit*] is thus related to being's convertibility with "nothing"—that is, to being's ratio boni—in which matter participates as *non ens*. The moment we identify the bonum with being's ideality, the moment we banish it to this realm, or we absolutize the positing of the essence, then we can no longer interpret matter in a properly speculative manner. In this case, we have cast an entitative veil over it. But if matter is structured as an entity, then it becomes the "potency-for-concrete-existence" of hypostasized being, that is, of the reason that contradiction emancipates for the ontological vacillation. The split between body and spirit thus results from the disobedience of thinking with respect to being as love. In this case, matter turns into the "other," which no longer has any relationship to superessential being.

It is not possible to say that materia prima *first*—that is, in the "beginning"—participates *only* in the bonum, but subsequently participates in being in addition once it is "actualized" with and through the form. Ens et bonum convertuntur! Being's ratio boni is not closed off to its exemplar causality. To be sure, the bonum is not identified with the ideality of being, but it also does not lie outside of "being in the crisis." We can therefore say that, in its similarity to the superessential "to be," matter points beyond being in mere ideality, insofar as matter is related to the bonum. But this "pointing beyond" opens up in the movement of finitization. If the bonum were identified with being in the crisis, then this would imply the substantialization of the "to be," and matter would not point beyond the crisis of being, and would not manifest being's exinanitio in obedience to its necessary sense. In reality, matter, as potency-for-concrete-existence, stretches itself out toward the necessary sense of being that unveils itself in being's kenosis. Therefore Thomas says: "even being in potency, which is non-existing in act, from the fact that it has an order to the good *has the notion of the good* (*habet rationem boni*), but it participates the causality of being when it is being in act."[67] If we do not view the original origin of matter from this perspective, then we cannot understand why it is that "primal matter has a likeness to God in so far as it has a share of being. For even as a stone, as a being, is like God, although it has no intelligence as God has, so primal matter in so far as it has being and yet not actual being, is like God. Because being is, so to say, common to potentiality and act."[68] But this ens commune is not a concept or, what amounts to the same, a substantialized *ens ut sic*. To say that it is would precisely negate the similitudo of materia prima to God, since the vacillating of being eclipses the absolute. Finite subjectivity would first have to bestow metaphysical "similarity," by introducing the contradiction and desubstantializing being. In this case, the finite spirit explicitly takes over matter's function, as it were, which as being's most extreme "potency-for-concrete-existence" makes manifest being's not clinging to itself.

We already saw earlier that the bonum allows possibility and actuality to be joined together in an original unity. If the ratio boni slips outside of being as being and hardens in itself through the presumption of reason in ideality, then the potency and act of finite substance fall apart from each other; the *ens commune* turns into the entitative medium in which possibility and actuality are indissolubly merged. The absolutized ontological state of reality places possibility and actuality inside of each other, and indeed in such a way that it is not the always already enduring unity of act and potency in the finite substance that comes to expression, but instead possibility and actuality absolutely implicate one another. If they therefore coincide in an isolated reality, then it is on the basis of the fact that the posited reality closed itself off from the transnihilation of being and is simply there as "always already actual."

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[67] *Div. nom.* 5.1.

[68] *De pot.* 3.1.12.

Thomas can therefore also say that the causality of the bonum is broader than that of ens, since the bonum never allows itself to be identified with being in the crisis. God would cease to be love if he aimed at the hypostasis of being in creation. "In fact, a thing is not called good simply because it is an end, or because it has achieved the end ... it is apparent in this conclusion that *good is, in a way, of wider scope than being*.... For, this non-existent thing—namely matter understood as subject to privation—desires a good, that is, to be."[69] The bonum is *amplioris ambitus*, "more universal," not according to the scope of predication, for in this it coincides entirely with *ens* (omne ens est bonum inquantum ens), but according to the logical structure [*Sinngestalt*] of its causality: "For efficient exemplary causality extends only to those things which participate *actually* in the form of their exemplary cause, and thus the causality of being insofar as being is a divine name extends only to existing things ... but the causality of an end extends to those things which do not yet participate in its form [such as matter, which does not participate in being *cum ponatur non ens*], since even imperfect things desire and tend toward their end, as not yet participating in the formal aspect (*ratio*) of the end, and on the way to it. For Dionysius calls nonbeing matter by virtue of an added privation; hence he also says that *this non being itself desires the good*."[70]

Everything that has at this point come to view would have to be unfolded in the terms of the dimension into which our path has led us. We will content ourselves with the basics.

In the chapter concerning the original illumination of being's convertibility with "nothing," we attempted to show that matter falls outside of being to the extent that we conceive being in an essentiell way as idea.

Here we would have to unfold more profoundly the conception of matter in modern metaphysics, above all in view of the fact that modern thinking has fallen back into a "Greek situation" as a result of essentializing the "to be." The foundering of being in the essence, the logicizing of love, led to an absolutizing of matter, which is no longer mediated by being with form in concrete subsistence. As a result of the gnostic hypostasizing of being, body and spirit had to come apart from one another and separate themselves in opposition to each other as *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. Already in Scotus and Suarez, matter makes itself independent as an entitative medium on the basis of the speculative a priori of substantialized being. God can therefore also create matter without form, because he is omnipotent. But just this "omnipotence" is enfeebled by the fact that it gradually enthrones the ontological hypostasis of the anti-god by absolutizing the essence, so that, at the same time, the emancipated matter, as the rebellious element of existence, is mastered by the reason that has withdrawn into the ontological vacillation. Since self-withholding being nevertheless as such necessarily degenerates into the res, insofar as it has lost its superessentiality, then the "pure spirit" gets wholly abandoned to matter—that is, to sensuality—or "materialized."

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[69] *SCG* 3.20.

[70] 1 *Sent*. 8.1.3.2.

This is something we ought to reflect on now in the broad contexts of the progressive "logicizing of the spirit" (cf. Part A, chap. IV.5, this volume), wherein we would come to understand how precisely the absolute, as "negation of the negation"—that is, as "spirit"—would necessarily founder in matter. The collapse [*Verfall*] of being into essence was in fact the process of the logicizing of the spirit, the process of the enfeebling of the Father through the metaphysical incest of the Son in what is other to God (*matter!*).

Conversely, we are able to say that, today, when we are beginning once again to perceive being's superessentiality, the "not yet" of the ontological difference as hope—that is, the exinanitio of being—which as the likeness of God's love does not cling to itself, we also have the task of bringing matter home.

But what does it mean, in terms of supernatural revelation, to speak of matter as the seal of the kenosis of the Logos in the Holy Spirit, in the impotence and poverty of the human condition? What does it mean, from this perspective, to speak of the incarnation of God, so that, in the exinanitio unto the end of time, the incarnation incorporates into itself the cosmic dimension of *matter* through the Holy Spirit in the enactment of the Ecclesia (cf. Part A, chap. VI.1.D, this volume), who celebrates in a profoundly mysterious way, in the "Eucharistia" (ontologically understood), the rupturing of the hypostasis of being through the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, as gratitude for the reception of being? What does matter mean here, understood in its entire cosmic breadth, so that Jesus's departure is only the seal of his ultimate ad-vent to the "many" as he pours himself out into space and time? What does matter mean here as the obediential dimension with respect to being's superessentiality? Here, unsuspected perspectives open up for a "theology of matter."

And, further, we can ask: If thinking's loss of superessentiality drags being down into the absolute essential past [*das absolute Gewesen der Essenz*] and makes it *a thing of the past* in the factical *res* (cf. Part A, chap. VIII.3 and 4, this volume), then how does matter, as the seal of being's superessentiality and of its not clinging to itself, open man into the "not yet" of the ontological difference that is never to be closed? How does matter unlock historicity, precisely in its authentic sense, which is never able to be conceptually mastered in the essential past, insofar as it originates from the ontological future? Have we in fact truly already heard the hidden message of "materialism"? What is God sending to us here? Is it at bottom—in the ground (!)—not the sign that being's hypostasis has been ruptured and the revelation of being as love, which in its infinite depths ultimately concerns precisely "the little one"? Is this not what is announced in the overcoming of the essentialized all-consuming past, even if it comes in the dark shadows and deformations of a horrible perversion? And if what we ought to sense in the absolutizing of the positive reality, which at the same time also unleashes matter, is the transnihilation of the "to be" that has always already occurred in its exinanitio—for the positive, factical reality draws its sustenance from this!—then don't we encounter here, amidst all the temptations, the great opportunity to hear the exinanitio of the Logos once again, to see him as our brother, who is always already with us, who walks with us and dwells among us . . . ?

The constant enactment of being's movement of finitization, indeed, opens—precisely according to the *way* in which it is enacted—ever new aspects in the dimension of salvation history, since grace arrives along the path of being.

But if the esse that "results from the principles of the essence," to which matter too belongs, is to be understood solely on the basis of its transnihilation, then what we have to ask is how this *resultans*, since indeed being is never recuperated as such, aims at being from the deepest depths of the material cosmos and as it were finds its satisfaction and its *ultimus finis* in the essence that as apprehensivus entis has appropriated the movement of finitization—that is, the transnihilation—and made it its own most proper task! What we have to ask is how the "family tree" of *evolution* (*resultans ex principiis essentiae* out of the ever antecedent reception of being) is only the revelation of the exinanitio of being as the condition of possibility that God has willed for the outpouring of his Word to us. And if the dynamic of the *resultans* is illuminated precisely on the basis of being's transnihilation—that is, of the superessentiality of being in its fullness—then we have to ask whether the most radical form of evolution in its final step to the "omega point"—precisely (!) because it is grasped most profoundly "from below"—does not at the same time have to be seen "from above" from the perspective of the exinanitio, of which it is not only the revelation but in fact also the most original enactment! (Cf. on this point Part A, chap. V.3.C, this volume.)

c. "Pure Spirit" and Matter

Materia prima can be determined as the nonessential enabling ground of being in concrete subsistence out of being's movement of finitization, whose focal point is man. Being does not ultimately manifest its superessentiality exclusively in its relation to the "pure essence," but rather in its allowing matter to proceed from itself. A deep metaphysical decision is made here!

The superessentiality of the necessary sense of being, the fullness of the "to be," has its proper legitimation not according to the degree of ever higher levels of being, but—if the word is permitted—according to the degree of "poverty" possible to being, which is the most original revelation of its positivity. The doctrine of the hierarchy of being, of course, has its roots in the ever more profound reception of being, as we will see later. But it stands under the judgment of the necessary sense of being, according to which the "pure spirit" as "pure essence" does not reveal the necessity of being and the abyss of the bonitas divina more explicitly than does man and the entire material cosmos. This is not at all to diminish the claim that the simpler the nature of a creature the greater its capacity for being! To the contrary, it will become evident that the simplicity of the "pure spirit" stands and falls with the acceptance [*Freigabe*] of being's movement of finitization and with the procession of the nonessential dimension of "nonspiritual" matter.

The angel, as "pure spirit," has its being immediately in relation to the pure, immaterial essence. In this way, it possesses a "higher level of being" with respect to a material entity. The angel's temptation therefore consists in playing the "higher level of being" off the necessity of the sense of being in bonitas, which is unveiled in the kenotic "poverty of being"; the angel is tempted, in other words, to fall into the disobedience of hypostasizing the "to be" in the vacillation and on this basis reclaiming all necessity for the hypostasis itself. The temptation reaches its peak in the detachment of being's exemplarity from the movement of finitization—that is, in the attempt to prove the positivity of being by reference to the "pure essence" in the vacillation of ideality—in order thereby to claim that the "pure spirit" is able *more originally* to manifest the fullness of the necessary sense of being, the ratio boni, in the pseudo-vacillation of the absolutely simple being over against its exinanitio—to claim, in other words, that the "pure spirit" *does not "need"* the ultimate enabling ground of being, in which its superessentiality is sealed, namely, matter. Thus "spirit," "pure spirit," gets played off the necessary sense of being of divine love. In this case, the essence of man, which gathers into itself the "*entire*" dimension of the movement of finitization, does *not need to come to expression*; "pure spirit" is the only thing we need! The anthropological focal point of the movement of finitization is thereby negated, and man, as the normative pattern of the creative act of the movement into subsistence, would thus have to be eliminated.

But in addition to the hypostasizing of being in the disobedience of "pure spirit," matter, as the seal of being's exinanitio, is at the same time left out of the relation to the likeness of divine love and posited for itself (cf. Part B, chap. II.2.B, this volume), that is, "abstracted" from the movement of finitization as an "entity." With this metaphysical decision of "pure spirit," a decision is also made concerning the "metaphysical locus" that originally belongs to it, which ends up being matter. Thus the disobedient angel falls to earth. The fallen pure spirit thus necessarily separates matter off from being's superessentiality and "covers" matter with the veil of ambiguity, which is conducted from the "Yes and No at once" to the fixed crisis of being as contradiction. This "Yes and No at once," however, first implied the enfeeblement of the Father (cf. Part A, chap. IV.5, this volume), but, second, the limitation of the Son by the otherness to which he is subject, so that he has to be granted his personal superessentiality in the movement out of the self-withholding of abstract identity, through the exinanitio, and into matter, and, third, the negation of the negation enacted as "Spirit": the "logicizing of the Spirit."

If there were such a temptation for the angel, then it did not arise for it in the sequentiality of physical spatiotemporality, but rather in the moment of his creation, since, as pure reason, the angel is much more "intensively" perceptive of being's movement of finitization than is man.

If we recall at this point what we said concerning the false theory of self-consciousness, then we will understand that the temptation to circumscribe the entire movement of finitization in thought and to interpret it in the presumptuous locus of the ontological vacillation arises much more radically for the angel than for man. Thus the fallen angel understands itself as the one designated to lead man into the dimension of the "Yes and No at once," in the twilight indecisiveness of being's hypostasis, and indeed to do so by means of the question that the decision of the crisis of being "calls into question"—the possibility of a self-withholding of being as love elevated into an object of reflection! In this moment, being is already kept in the indifference of the ontological vacillation. Spirit's obedient decisiveness with respect to the necessary sense of being is rendered ambiguous.

The snake therefore asks man in paradise: "Did God *really* forbid you to eat from any tree?" With this, the word of God is detached from the Father as the speaker; the Father falls on the basis of tempted reason into the "Yes and No at once"; his word loses its decisiveness and univocity; and being as the gift of love, the fundamental pull of being's movement of finitization, the affirmation of the exinanitio, first has to prove its univocity through the reflection of finite reason. God's address is made into an abstract fixum of reflection, which first has to be led into the mediated univocity of its positivity, and the question arises whether in fact he could have made things some other way ... ? But this ambiguity is already the beginning of sin.

If we become mindful of the word as the guardian of ontological spatiotemporality and of being's movement of finitization, and later come to see that the decision in the word as the known essence of the entity properly occurs in the dimension of being's superessentiality, then the entire abyss of this event of temptation will open up for us.

But for now let us return to our original path, following the pull of the matter at hand!

The great temptation of finite reason to conceive the essence as the "sole" enabling ground of being and to denigrate matter thus lies in the immediate relation of being to the "pure essence." The "spirit" has thus brought about the entire necessary sense of being, the fullness of the "to be," which is revealed as love, in the negation of the kenosis of being in the variety and multiplicity of the material cosmos. In this sense, it becomes the adversary of the other "Spirit," who preserves the superessentiality of the "to be" and is revealed in the necessary sense of being.

Although the being of the "pure spirit" is originally related to the immaterial essence, this decides nothing at bottom concerning a lapsing of being's superessentiality. To the contrary, what is at issue here is the fact that the "pure spirit" sustains the dimension of superessentiality, the "emanatio *totius* esse," and thereby opens the way for [*freigibt*] the procession of the nonessential dimension of matter as being's "potency-for-concrete-existence." In its receptive apprehension of being, the "pure spirit" thus cannot remain standing in itself or concentrate being as being on the pure essence, that is, identify its pure spiritual existence with being in the crisis.

If it remains standing in itself, then being is not gratefully possessed [*verdankt*], because its violent fixing on the immaterial essence occurs *against* the exinanitio, which implies a being tangled up in itself. Such a being does not hand itself over and thus can neither be received nor owed. The ingratitude of the pure spirit thus gets decided in its refusal to let matter be. It is a decision against being's superessentiality. The crisis of being is not undergone.

In the same moment in which matter—that is, man as the concretely subsisting focal point of the entire (!) scope of being's movement of finitization—is not allowed to be, being is essentialized. Being is no longer received as a gift; the self-gift [*Selbstaufgabe*] of being, in which it clears the space for the material creation, in which at the same time it makes itself into a task [*Aufgabe*] for this material creation in view of man capax entis, is refused. Thinking preserves its openness to being's superessentiality in thanking. But if the pure spirit bears being back to the origin in gratitude, then it releases the exinanitio in loving obedience, then it says "yes" to the superessentiality of the "to be," then in obedience to being and solely by virtue of the fact that it exists as pure spirit, it opens up the entire theme of the movement of finitization: it says "yes" to man. Thus, in this act of gratitude, being's movement of finitization remains sound [*heil*] in its basic form!

Thomas has set this truth forth in a profoundly insightful way in *De ver-*

itate 8.16. He asks "Whether morning knowledge should be distinguished from evening knowledge in angels," and answers (ad 6): "By their natural knowledge, however, angels first knew themselves in themselves, and, having known themselves, *they did not remain there to enjoy their own selves and, as it were, make themselves their own ends* (for then they would have become "night"—as angels who sinned); instead, they turned their knowledge back to the praise of God [the act of gratitude!]. Hence, from contemplation of themselves angels *turned to a contemplation of the Word* [the release of being's movement of finitization in the affirming opening of the variety and multiplicity of the cosmic order as the condition of possibility of the exinanitio of the Logos that is freely willed by God], in whom existed the morning of the following day, inasmuch as the angels received knowledge in the Word of the creature that was to follow, namely, the firmament." In this abyssal sentence, Thomas gives expression to what we have been trying to indicate here: The relation to itself as "pure essence" tempts the "pure spirit" to reject the dimension of the superessentiality of esse and thus of matter, insofar as the entire abyss of the movement of finitization, the focal point of which is man, comes to expression in it. The *conversio in Verbi contemplationem*, however, is the letting-be of man "by" the angel and indeed what this means for the "pure spirit" is: not to remain in itself, not to posit itself as that which has control, as Thomas says, but rather to give gratitude for what has been received. But gratitude is the angel's turning *ad Verbi contemplationem*, so that in a profoundly mysterious way the theme of the *eucharistia* already comes to light in embryo as the comprehensive enactment of the mystery of creation in general! What an extraordinary dimension opens up to us here! This allows us to propose a possible answer to the questions that Karl Rahner raises (*Schriften zur Theologie,* 1:24), when he says that the angels' relationship to the world "is to be determined positively" and that it is not sufficient to say that the angels are "pure spirits." But we cannot enter into this matter in the present context.

Man is nevertheless the plumb line of being's movement of finitization because *he* encompasses through his essence *all* the enabling dimensions that lie within the spectrum of ontological participation, and as embodied spirit stands in the same temptation as the angel: to sacrifice the superessentiality of the "to be," the exinanitio, to pseudo-subsistence and to surrender the "poverty in spirit" to the pseudo-wealth of substantialized being.

Because man encompasses all the dimensions of ontological participation, insofar as the human spirit is received in matter, which enters into the "distress of the temptation," the angel's temptation is ultimately aligned with the temptation man faces; indeed, we could say that it is nothing other than "*man*" who decides this temptation of the "pure spirit."

For the angel, the decision concerning obedience with respect to the necessary sense of being is made in the moment of its creation with a view to man, not in the successiveness of physical spatiotemporality. But man, as embodied spirit, so long as he is in *this* body, has to undergo the temptation of the negation of the kenosis of being in its superessentiality. But at the same time, he has in matter the great opportunity for being's superessentiality, since matter is the pledge of the kenosis of being as love, the arena for the history in which the crisis of being is undergone in gratitude. Therefore man, insofar as he wanders the earth in the body, can never close himself inside the pseudo-subsistence of being against the necessary sense of being in such a way that he does not retain, from his essence, the ability to obey anew, because he has made his own the potency-for-concrete-existence that belongs to being *actu*, in which being's superessentiality as love comes to expression in a profoundly mysterious way. In this, the mysterium of the flesh is both revealed and concealed at once: *Caro cardo salutis* (Tertullian).

3. An Interpretation of the Anthropological Focus of the Movement of Finitization

A. Man in the Unfolding of Ontological Spatiotemporality

Since we have attempted to interpret the dimension of matter on the basis of being's movement of finitization, at least in basic outline, we ought now to try briefly to give expression to ontological spatiotemporality, insofar as it casts a particular light on the meaning of man. In doing so, we presuppose everything that has already been said about the theme in earlier parts of the book.

Reason draws its sustenance from the luminous night of the crisis of being. As a result of being's transnihilation, reason experiences both its embodiment and its dependence on the quiddities of corporeal entities, on the positively given, materially enduring reality. But what unveils itself to man out of the crisis of being is also all the enabling ground of matter, unto the outermost potency-for-concrete-existence. Man thematically opens up the entire dimension of ontological participation into the ground of the onto-logical difference of being from beings. This is why his essence consists in the undergoing of this difference.

Now, Thomas says, "It is the intellect that makes man man."[71] The intellect, or reason, is originally opened up into the crisis of being. Being in the crisis was made manifest in the pull of the movement into subsistence toward the concrete substance, a movement that passes "through" the essence into being's mediated self-affirmation in the ontological ad-vent. Reason, as capax entis, comes toward itself from this ad-vent—that is, from the "to be"—since it cannot be external to being. Being itself brings reason to itself in embodied subsistence from its "ad-vent" and awakens reason to its life. Thus in thinking, which is man's *propria operatio*, man comes out of the ad-vent of the "to be" toward himself as that which he always already is as man in concrete subsistence. It follows that he can be one who comes toward himself [*zu-künftig*] only insofar as he has already been in the past [*ge-wesen*]. Man comes toward himself out of being in the enactment of being's exinanitio, by virtue of which he is always already embodied spirit, that is, "spirit in the world" (K. Rahner). What this means for man's concrete self-enactment is that he can return to himself as finite spirit only insofar as he takes his beginning in that which he always already "is" and in that which has always already involved him, namely, the material entities. The "ad-vent" of the "to be," however, projects for itself [*entwirft sich*] the materia prima as its ultimate enabling ground, in which it manifests itself as the ad-vent of the superessential "to be." If man's knowledge thus does not begin with the senses, in the incalculability of historical existence, then not only is the "ad-vent of the 'to be'" rendered impossible, but so too is man's return to himself. Matter is in this sense the historical crisis of the ontological "ad-vent" of man in hope.

But we saw that the sensible reality is never able to leave the superessential crisis of the "to be" in ideality behind itself in such a way—assuming this reality is taken seriously as a speculative matter—as to preclude the revelation of the entire breadth of the ontological difference, to which reason is open and which it enables [*vermögend ist*]. Reason enters into the speculative foregrasp out toward being only on the basis of the always already given material reality. For man, there is a future, that is, a coming-toward [*Zu-kunft*], only on the basis of the "essential past" ["*Ge-wesen*"], of his embodied being-in-the-world, in which historical limitation has expanded to meet the "ad-vent" of what comes toward it. Man never achieves himself in the absolutely liberated projection of his essence on the basis of the hypostasis of being; he never projects his essence out of the "indecisiveness" of being as such, that is, out of an "undetermined existence" (Sartre). For if this undetermined being is substantialized, it renders every ad-vent a thing of the past. Man sets out on the path to himself—as personal gratitude for the reception of being—only out of the concrete "essential past" that has been given into his ownership, and always already handed over to him in the metaphysical tradition, an essential past that can never be recaptured in reflection.

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[71] *Met.* 1.1.2.

Man therefore approaches himself from the dimension of the ad-vent of being as what he has always already essentially been. However, man's "having-been"—which lies in the dimension of the enduring reality of his concrete subsistence—can only have been insofar as man is arriving futurally ["*zukünftig*"], for the positing of the essence springs from being's coming to itself in the movement into subsistence. It is only out of this "ontological" distance, which is original to him, that man enters into his "present," into the "there" as one who is "present" to the other as a Thou, because he is "present" to himself in personal subsistence (indeed, the movement of finitization is radically decided in "being present," in the ontological "turning toward" [*Gegen-wart*]) (cf. Part A, chap. VII, this volume).

The presence of being has its seal in the moment of bonicity. We nevertheless saw that matter, as being's superessential enabling dimension, has its origin in the exinanitio of being as love, which aims at the bonum. We are thus able to say that matter is the field in which man's coming-toward and has-been have their "there," their present. Ontological spatiotemporality thus reveals itself through man (as the concretely existing focal point of the ontological difference) in physical spatiotemporality. But because man at the same time must undergo the triune God (cf. Part A, chap. VI.4, this volume) in this thematic, he is thus opened up to the Thou of God in the There of his ontological present in a profoundly mysterious way as the one who has always already been addressed by God in the undergoing of the ontological difference. Matter represents the inexhaustible depths of the field and the metaphysical dimension in which the Word of God addressed to man occurs in history; it is the historical place in which being's not clinging to itself in its nonsubsistence becomes "event" and comes to completion [*zum Austrag kommt*] as the Yes of God's creative love.

When Heidegger says that "temporality unveils itself as the meaning of authentic care,"[72] we now have a better sense of what he means. For Heidegger, care is an *existentiale of Dasein*, that is, of man. What care means, at bottom, is that "What is at issue for man is finitude."

If man is given the task of undergoing the crisis of being in the enactment of the movement of finitization, then indeed what is at issue for him, in his essence, is finitude, insofar as he is not permitted to hypostasize or substantialize being in the crisis: Instead, he is called upon obediently to affirm the surrender of being in its "poverty." Thus what is most profoundly at issue for man is finitude; indeed, in this sense (which has to be properly understood), his "essence" consists "in finitude." What is meant here is by no means that God would have to negate or that man, or indeed being, would be abandoned to pure finitude. Precisely the opposite is the case: the more seriously one takes the crisis of being, or in other words the more radically one carries out the movement of finitization—that is, interprets the convertibility of being and "nothing" in the determination of man as the plumb line of the movement of finitization—the more immediately one experiences the omnipotent loving presence of God, since nothing intervenes as a "medium" between God and the creature.

It also becomes intelligible why this elucidation of the essence of man's finitude or, in Heidegger's words, "clarifying the *essence of finitude* in Dasein from out of the constitution of its being must precede all 'self-evident' assumptions concerning the finite 'nature' of the human being."[73] It is just this clarification of the "essence of finitude" that we have attempted to unfold following Aquinas.

"Care," as an existentiale of Dasein (of man), can therefore only mean that what is at issue for man in undergoing the crisis of being in obedience to the necessary sense of being is the enactment of being's movement of finitization, wherein he experiences himself as dependent on the always already posited entity (positive reality!), whereby ontological participation has always already been superseded in concrete subsistence. Therefore what is most profoundly at issue for man is finitude, precisely because of his original intimacy with God as embodied spirit. What is radically at issue for him is finitude, insofar as he undergoes the crisis of being in "care" about finitude. This is the only way that "care" can be understood; otherwise, everything else will be misinterpreted.

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[72] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 300 [*Sein und Zeit*, 326].

[73] Heidegger, "On the Essence of Ground," in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 135.

Now, the spiritual [*geistige*] enactment of being's movement of finitization is nothing other than the unfolding of ontological spatiotemporality into the future (ad-vent), the past (essence) (ontological distances) and the present (turning toward). From this perspective, it becomes evident that "temporality unveils itself as the meaning of authentic care." As capax entis, man is able to unfold the movement of finitization: indeed, he is its focal point.

If he speculatively undergoes the crisis of being, he determines himself in his "beginning" from out of the ad-vent of being, in the crisis of which his self-enactment has its roots. Insofar as he "affirms himself" in this speculative development of being, man allows himself to come to himself as the paradigm of the movement of finitization. He is able to carry out the "letting-oneself-come-toward-oneself" ["*Sich-auf-sich-zukommen-lassen*"]! But this does not at all mean that man is in a position to receive and apprehend being as being! To say this would once again simply be to posit the indifference of the vacillation of being. No, we have to take the crisis of being radically seriously!

The *essence* of man is able to come toward itself only out of the *superessentiality* of the "to be." Insofar as man decides the crisis of being and unveils himself as the basic measure of being's movement of finitization, he has to bear witness therein to the fact that being is *simpliciter superius*: Man is not able to absorb being into himself.

By virtue of the power of the necessary sense of being, the following statement from Heidegger is thus already placed in judgment: "here 'future' does not mean a now that has *not yet* become 'actual' and that sometime *will be* for the first time, but the coming in which Da-sein comes toward itself in its ownmost potentiality-of-being."[74] If Heidegger means by this that man can place himself in the crisis of being, "out" of which being comes to itself, so that the crisis of being is determined a priori as man's (!) most primordially authentic ability-to-be, then the sentence is false! It is especially false if this is then interpreted as "anticipatory resoluteness."[75] But if we see that being cannot suspend itself in the vacillation of an indifferentiated crisis but empties itself in the pull of the necessary sense of being "through" the essence ... and we moreover see that man can be directed toward what is coming-toward [*zu-künftig*] in the enactment of being's movement of finitization only as what he has always already essentially been, then the sentence is correct, and no reason can be produced to reject it. However, because the essence proceeds from him precisely in being's self-communication, man can "have been only insofar as he is coming-toward."[76] And it is only out of this distance that man is in the "there" of his ontological present.[77]

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[74] *Being and Time*, 299 [*Sein und Zeit*, 325].

[75] *Being and Time*, 299 [*Sein und Zeit*, 326].

Because we interpreted ontological spatiotemporality on the basis of participation in the first part of this work, it seems that we can now give a clearer answer to the question concerning the relationship between "being and time" in the dimension of "Dasein." It is evident that such a view that is mindful of being as being—a view that is "objectifying" in the *true* sense of the word because it does not presume the hypostasis of being—is able above all to determine the basic outline of the relationship between the being of beings and the essence of man. Lavelle is right to say that "time is the key to participation."[78]

But we have seen what temptations beset man as he undergoes the issues and problems that constitute his existence. Can we not therefore say, from the perspective of what we have seen up to this point, that man's history is nothing other than just this enactment of ontological spatiotemporality in the dimension of matter? Isn't the abyssal possibility of a fall [*des Verfalles*] also given here, a fall that has its roots in the substantializing of being and thus a concrete history that is set against the original enactment of ontological obedience? Man can close himself off from the necessary sense of being and thus go astray in his There as a result of the speculatively falsely dimensioned ontological distances of the ad-vent and the essential past.

Here a possible misunderstanding arises! One might imagine that what we have presented would lead to an absolute anthropologizing of metaphysical speculation, and would dissolve being into pure historicity, whereby the "objectifying" vision and presentation of ontological spatiotemporality, which was worked out in the first part of this work, would be reinterpreted as a pure subjectivism. This would in fact be the case if speculative thought had transposed itself into the hypostasized ideality of being and its historical openness had thus negated the ever-arriving and self-giving being. It is precisely the angst in the face of the incalculable radicality of the historical that emancipates reason into the substantializing of being and drives it along this path into the absolute collapse into the historical, which is nothing other than atomizing a pure having-been in the sphere of "persisting" reality, as we pursue this endeavor. If the belonging together of being and man is not speculatively interpreted from out of being's superessentiality, then metaphysics necessarily ends in historicism; this fate comes to expression in a constraining of thought to reality in its particularity or an awaiting of being, which is always yet to send itself—in other words, we thus sink into the impotence of the "pure duration" of myth, that is, into the extremity of either the "pure future" or the "pure past" of being (cf. Part A, chap. VIII, this volume).

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[76] *Being and Time*, 299 [*Sein und Zeit*, 326], translation modified.

[77] Cf. *Being and Time*, 299 [*Sein und Zeit*, 326].

[78] Lavelle, *La Présence Totale* (Paris: Aubier, 1934), 164.

But our path does not reach its end in "subjectification." To the contrary, the speculative explication is "objectified" out of the enactment of being's movement of finitization in such a way that the roots of the so-called subjective aberrations are only now able to be discovered and determined.

But if human reason is received in matter, then the manner of its undergoing of ontological spatiotemporality has to be accomplished and translated *into world*. Because matter originates wholly and completely (as the potency-for-concrete-existence of the being that does not withhold itself) from the word of love spoken in being's exinanitio, physical spatiotemporality in the dimension of matter stands wholly and completely in the service of ontological spatiotemporality and is nothing other than its "appearance." History thus occurs through man's enactment of himself in the undergoing of self-finitizing being as love.

All thinking, therefore, in its original exercise thus takes place from the perspective of being's ad-vent, but in the same way also on the basis of what always already is and has been thought. Man can open himself thinkingly into the apprehension of being only if this grows out of the always already received being as thanking. He enters into thinking only out of what has always already beforehand [*vor-weg*] been given over to him, without thereby falling victim to the flat positivism of the factically neutralized "reality."

All thinking thus comes to speech [*zu Wort*] only out of tradition, just as the enactment of being's movement of finitization, which has to be undergone in every case thinkingly as thanking, occurs out of the traditio. Man enters into self-actualization as one who has always already come to in-dwell in existence [*ins Dasein Ein-gewohnter*]. He is not able to recapture this enrootedness that has always already historically occurred and gather it up into the "future" of his return to himself or sublate it by means of his freedom. This would imply the possibility of a transcendental deduction of the factical, material res from the "to be." The always-already having-taken-up-residence unveils the enduring "reality" of being, which the movement into subsistence has overtaken. Just as man is invited and attuned to this dimension—his *embodied*-spiritual basic disposition [*Grundbefindlichkeit*] belongs to it—so too he is able to interpret the already superseded difference opened by reason in its speculative foregrasp out toward being as being in the enactment of his self-actualization in the a posteriori.

All of this would have to be more thoroughly unfolded in view of the question concerning the event of human growth and human maturity or even more originally in relation to a metaphysics of education [*Erziehung*], which would have to develop metaphysically the basic disposition and attunement of human existence that has always already eventuated out of the a priori enactment of being's movement of finitization. Thinking cannot dissociate itself from its enrootedness in the always already "given" reality, just as esse cannot separate itself from the essence and withdraw back into its ontological yet-to-come. Thoughtful human discourse therefore stands fundamentally in the acceptance of what has always already come to expression, and it is only by accepting this that thinking has a future [*Zu-kunft*].

If esse, however, is not "received" by the essence and thinking gets carried away into the absolutized yet-to-come of being, then there is nothing to be thankful for anymore. It is only thinking out of the tradition that thinks because it thanks, and makes evident that all the ad-vent of being and along with it the future of thinking is enabled by the has-been, on the basis of the dimension in which being has always already been received by the essence and bears witness to its transnihilation.

Just as the banishment to the absolute "yet-to-come" makes thinking hubristic, so too does the enactment of reason that falls prey to the positive givenness of the essence, to the apparently conceptually masterable *old law of the essential past* [*Ge-setz des Ge-wesen*], go astray.

The "pure" reality, or the absolute dependence historical man has on the always already given that has been allocated to him, saps his energy and renders him impotent. His mere subservience to whatever happens to take place in history [*das geschichtlich Ankünftige*], on the basis of which he enters into thinking, abandons him to the facticity of the res, which he is never able "to sublate" in obedience and thinkingly to gather into himself in a thanking. Such a thinking knows no fulfillment, no reception of futural being, and thus consumes itself in the "old law" ["*Ge-setz*"], in the insatiable expectation for something that has already concretely arrived, but was not received by it, insofar as the emancipation of "the law" presents, to be sure, a dimension of the always already perfect past, but that in its abstract and unmediated fixedness drives man into the futility of actualization, from which he constantly sinks back, as "the guilty one," into the tragic "not yet."

All recollection therefore has gratitude as its basis, and stands thinkingly open to the ad-vent; indeed, it comes into its own [*ereignet sich*] out of this openness toward the ad-vent. Everything that man thinks is thought from out of the ad-vent, but in grateful recollection of what has been from the future. Only thus does he think truly here and now in the "There" of his ontological present, which is the seal of his thinking as thanking (cf. in this volume Part A, chap. VI.1.D, esp. the connection between "thinking and Eucharistia").

But the field and the dimension in which this history of thought's obedience to the superessentiality of being is played out constitute matter. It is what first enables the history of thought in its most extreme efforts as the total decision of being's movement of finitization, the focal point of which is man. Matter is the field of human history simpliciter; in it, however, is also revealed that depth in which the failure and the disobedience of the human self-enactment in the exinanitio of the Logos is redeemed and is liberated into the superessentiality of the "to be."

History as the decision of being's movement of finitization is the history of human self-actualization, in which man always already stands in the collective conversation of the *one* humanity, the unity of which coalesces in the rhythm of the onto-logical difference, which has been undergone and is to be undergone in thought: out of the ontological "ad-vent" of being and the "inward recollection" ["*Er-innerung*"] of that which this always already "has been." It is precisely by taking part in this conversation that man comes to be "there," to exist concretely.

B. "Metaphysics as Reenactment" and the "Absolute System"

Let us call to mind once again the great temptation that would lead us to separate out the ontological moments of being's movement of finitization from each other and to see the coming toward (future), the having-been (past), and the turning-toward (present) as isolated pieces, insofar as we localize the coming-toward in the as-yet undecided dimension of the ideality of being, the having-been in the always already enduring, essentielly stamped reality, and the being present in being's bonicity. This is something we cannot emphasize enough. It is only because the movement of finitization has always already reached its end, only because the concrete, finite entity is always already unfolded in ontological spatiotemporality, that we are able to interpret ontological spatiotemporality "anthropologically" by the act of reason. It is only because there exists the "objective" dimension of being that has always already affirmed itself in concrete subsistence, a dimension that cannot be recaptured by reason [*für die Vernunft uneinholbare*], that ontological spatiotemporality can be speculatively interpreted as man's self-enactment.

If ontological spatiotemporality reveals itself in physical spatiotemporality, insofar as matter is the dimension that bears witness to being's superessentiality, then we have to ask how the various moments of temptation manifest themselves in the world in terms of speculative presuppositions. Specifically, if this dimension of spatiotemporality is unfolded anthropologically, then there would in principle be the possibility of retrieving the individual aberrations of thought back into the ground that made them possible.

It may have already become evident in the course of our discussion how entire periods of thought exhibit nothing other than the necessary consequences of a speculative a priori, carried out to the end, which resulted from the specific event of being's movement of finitization in the spirit. The way man enacts the movement of finitization is also necessarily the way he realizes ontological spatiotemporality and, in doing so, realizes himself.

He falls into a variety of temptations in this act of self-actualization, but all of them converge into a single one: whether it would not in fact be possible to bring being to itself from out of the negation of the movement of finitization by circumventing the transnihilation and thus to pervert being as the highest likeness of God into the anti-God. This original temptation arises from an ambiguity, which points out that reason already manages to stretch itself out into being as being. This is perfectly correct and legitimate, for whoever wanted to deny it would have to reject the possibility of interpreting man in a way that is adequate to his essence [*wesensgerecht*].[79] But there is already ambiguity in the sentence "It is quite right that reason, in its apprehending, stretches itself out into being as being"! For man runs the risk of disempowering his openness toward being into an impotence that secretly coerces being into handing itself over to him. But being is thereby immediately established a priori as something that has not been "given" as a gift [*nicht "Geschenktes"*]. Thus this temptation needs only the tiniest shift of emphasis with regard to the "apprehension of being," which to be sure hiddenly contains the distinguishing feature of the human spirit ... and the entire metaphysical illumination of the essence of man goes astray. It is the great temptation, which adds the speculative index of "impotence" to the being that reveals itself as infinite fullness first of all (!) in the poverty of kenosis, and thus prefers the pseudo-wisdom of the reason that is enraptured, carried away into the hypostasis of being, to the folly of the "little way," and the plenitude of the faculty of the self-withholding being in its blind and all-overpowering might to the nuisance of the movement of finitization.

The great ambiguity emerges at the moment in which the temptation says: "Stretch yourself out perceptively into being! You are only legitimizing your humanity! Do justice to the operation that is proper to you as a 'human being in its wholeness.'" In this very moment, reason imprisons itself in the crisis of being. This crisis becomes "Yes and No at once" and marches into reason as a glittering concept.

What are the consequences? On the one hand, there is something of importance for ontological spatiotemporality. If being has fallen into perversion by virtue of the reason that apprehends it and thus becomes substantialized, but if the "ideated" dimension of being corresponds to its ontological ad-vent, which is always already preceded by a corresponding having-been, on the basis of which being has its concrete present, then there exists in principle the possibility of an "anti-time" as a perverted temporality derived from pseudo-subsistence and of "anti-space," which the pseudo-subsisting being releases from itself: the absolute womb of the all-bearing and at the same time all-consuming essence simpliciter. One can understand the inner dynamic of such a distorted thinking when one recalls that, identified with being in the vacillation, by virtue of the systematic structure of the analogy of error, it has an original relationship to the true enactment of the movement of finitization even in the perversion and therefore lives in apparently absolute certainty in "its" spatiotemporality and almost infallibly carries out "its" history.

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[79] No one can dispute the fact that "the intelligence is the faculty of being just as sight is the faculty of colors." Geiger, *La participation*, 335.

Let us keep in mind the fact that the will aims at the good. But the good, in which the necessary sense of being unveils itself, is the force that ignites and sustains the movement of finitization, in which being's convertibility with "nothing" makes a decision that commits it to being in subsistence (!). Thus the will's decision acquires the ontological "place" *for thinking*, in obedience or disobedience, even though it is specifically the intellect that opens the crisis of being, "sustains" it, and thus first enables the will to carry out its specific operation. We will have to explain this at greater length later on. For now, what is important is the fact that the will—that is, love—radically co-decides and completes the movement of finitization, according to the degree of its detachment in its aiming at the concrete subsistence of being. The will wills the good, on the basis of which the entity's ideality and reality have their crisis (cf. Part A, chap. VI.4, this volume). Reason thus successfully undergoes the crisis of being ultimately only in the purity of love, which does not will a bonum that neutralizes the kenosis of being in the ideality of the true, but one that manifests itself as "bonum *in rebus*," which Thomas repeatedly emphasizes. The measure of the intensity of this love, which turns outward [*auskehrenden*] and lets be, makes the decision concerning the obedience of reason with respect to the transnihilation of the being that does not cling to itself.[80] Precisely in this extro-version of love, being's pseudo-hypostasis is put to death, being as being does not keep itself in the vacillation but is always already positively existing entity out of the transnihilation, as that which man wills and claims for himself insofar as he transcends himself through his will. What comes about in this relationship between intellect and will is therefore—though this can only be indicated here—the historical shape of man's self-actualization that results from the enactment of being's finitization. The aberration is therefore never simply something decided in ideality by reason, but is originally enabled and sustained by the act of the will. But insofar as what is limited and bound to a partial perspective in the error manifests itself to us as such, we have already transcended it into the root of truth. This root of truth nevertheless never allows itself to be "objectified" or systematized—that is, fixed into the terminus of the reductio of the error to its ground—and this is the case precisely because reason's enactment of the movement of finitization ultimately has its roots in the love that has always already ruptured the essentialized ideality of the verum. The proper overcoming of the hypostasis of being occurs only in "historical obedience." We had to enter more deeply into what was presented above so that the entire scope of the temptation and perversion could come to light at least in its basic outline.

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[80] The love that is moved by the otherness of the law, which is not capable of willing the good by itself simply because it "is" good, thus corresponds to the positivity of being that is not yet unveiled in its superessentiality, a being that is subject to the otherness of the essence.

According to everything we have worked out, there exists the fundamental possibility of undergoing the great temptations and periods of thought in obedience to the necessary sense of being. The condition of possibility of a "metaphysics as reenactment" [*Metaphysik in der Wiederholung*] is given with the anthropological unfolding of being's movement of finitization.

What we mean by "metaphysics as reenactment" is the retrieval or repetition, in the origin of the ontological difference, of the movements of thought that have occurred in history, which becomes thematic as being's movement of finitization in man's self-enactment. Man thus represents the basic measure of this repetition. With Kant, we are able to say: "This sort of exploration will always remain difficult, for it is equivalent to the metaphysics of a metaphysics."[81] We believe that such a metaphysics as reenactment is possible, even though the basic measure we would follow in fashioning it can never be objectively systematized, since this measure has its roots in the superessentiality of the "to be."

The scope of this repetition is made evident in its entire depth when we more carefully investigate the human faculties from the perspective of the ontological difference of being, so that in this case the historical acts, in which man undergoes the difference, as we attempted to present them in the first part of this work, become actually determinative in concrete existence. For the vertical dimension of being's movement of finitization reveals its meaning in man's sensual-worldly exitus and the internalizing, spiritual reditus to himself.

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[81] Kant, in a letter to Markus Herz (1781), cited by Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 161. Cf. Maurice Blondel's observation regarding his own work: "And at bottom what I am proposing is a panlogism, a total reintegration of life into thought.... I am in effect proposing to establish a General Logic, of which the logic of Aristotle, Bacon, and Hegel would be only particular cases." A. Lalande, *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie*, 8th ed. (Paris: PUF, 1960), 1251. The basic outline of this general logic, as we have seen, is the exinanitio of being, and it is therefore never able to be logicized in the sense of a closing of the ontological difference, even when this closing hides itself in the fire of the negation of negation, which ultimately proceeds in just as "linear" a fashion. There is nevertheless such a thing as the "logic of the finitizing of being," which has its root in the incarnation of the Logos. Cf. also Blondel: "there is such a thing as the illogical, in the sense that the opposites are of the same genus, but there is at bottom no such thing as the alogical." (Both citations come from P. Henrici, *Hegel und Blondel*, Pullacher Philosophische Forschungen III [Pullach: Verlag Berchmanskolleg, 1958], 27. To be sure, the ontological difference does not include being and the entity in the sense of presupposing a generic unity between them.)

"Metaphysics as reenactment" is a work that has yet to be achieved. The task is to listen through that which has been said, in every case historically, and factically given expression, with an ear attuned to the superessentiality of the "to be," and in this way to get to the bottom of the thinker's movement of thought by carrying it into the ontological difference. The attempts at thought are led into the crisis of being, and from this perspective the thinking is in turn placed as it were in the decision; that is, it is to be "reenacted" ["*nachvollzogen*": understood]. This does not mean that the uniqueness of the historical utterance is sublated in an "absolute system" into which the utterance is inserted in its proper place. In an endeavor of that sort, the hypostasis of being will always necessarily remain determinative. But if the "metaphysics as reenactment" sets out from the theme of the primal division of being/the judgment of existence, then it is utterly unable to eliminate the historical facticity of what has been said, insofar as the logic its operation follows is the logic of the exinanitio of being, which resists any attempt to "logicize" it.

However "abstract" even this endeavor may seem at first glance, it is nevertheless entirely concrete. For the repetition that we intend here allows us to interpret the concrete, worldly states and conditions [*Zuständlichkeiten und Befindlichkeiten*] of human Dasein and to lead them back to their roots in the sense of an ontology of the individual. Once the ontological vacillation was broken through in the proper enactment of human self-actualization on the basis of the revelation of being as love, then thought opens up and thus all concrete being-in-the-world receives illumination. In this concrete being-in-the-world, the constellation of ontological spatiotemporality that is posited in each moment takes shape in human Dasein. The foundation of such an individual ontology is the transcendental deduction of the human essence, which is what we are attempting here.

Metaphysics as reenactment also permits us to "enter into the thinking"

["*Einvernehmen*"] of the great minds of history, precisely in that moment in which we speculatively disclose the factical utterances and hear their words as if they were springing anew from the depth of the light of nonessential being. Metaphysics as reenactment is therefore anything but an "inquisition," which sends thinking, armed with the ontological difference locked up in an absolute concept as a result of the hypostasis of being, into the field of the spirit.

Instead, what emerges from all of this is the speculative condition of possibility for a "self-critique of philosophy." This is not at all a "historical assessment of intellectual history" and certainly not a schematizing mastery of what progressively unveiled itself as thought has evolved. The self-critique also does not presuppose that there exists an absolute beginning for philosophizing, an ultimate conceptual simplicity, on the basis of which we would be able to relate the always historical periods to the system of all systems. The focal point of the movement of finitization, which man represents in concrete self-enactment, does not allow itself—unless it is precisely *against* the exinanitio of being—to be objectified and made into the design of an absolute method, into which we insert the unique contributions of each thinker like pieces of a mosaic. For the foregrasp out toward being occurs from out of the historical positivity of the "factum," which reason can never recapture—that is, from out of the positive material reality, which can neither be sublimated into an "encompassing ground" of being, nor represented as the rigidified extension of the ground into finitude. There is therefore no such thing as a "system of all systems" without the presupposition of a "logicized spirit"—that is, a pneumatic reason—which arrogates ipsum esse to itself and, in the dialectic of the contradiction, *determines* it in the fire of *non subistens* as negatio all the way into the concrete. On this path, the history of philosophy and the system of philosophy converge into one. The ad-vent of the "to be" does not allow itself, in reason's speculative foregrasp, to be made into a "thing of the past" in the system of all systems or to be left behind thinking without the not-yet of hope being extinguished and the ontological difference being sublated in absolute knowledge. What results when this happens is the false unity of system and history of philosophy, even though this unity contains in itself a profound truth, which is easy to understand after everything that has been said.

The "beginning" of philosophy is nothing other than the beginning of spirit in the world; indeed, it is so much a positive historical beginning in the world that what comes to light therein is precisely the entire sharpness of the self-exchange of being and "nothing" as ordered to the positive reality. But just as reason can never reflectively recapture its subjection to history without thereby logicizing the nonessential dimension of matter, so too is reason unable exhaustively to conceptualize its "beginning" in the crisis of being without substantializing the "to be." Man's concrete self-actualization thus transcends both the essentialized future of being as well as the absolutized essential past of reality (both of which imply the collapse of thinking into mythology) into the ontological "there." The "beginning" in philosophy is thus most profoundly rooted in the historicity of being-present, wherein this present is unable to slough off the "distances" that originally appertain to it (cf. Part B, chap. II.3.A, this volume).

Philosophy's self-critique as such therefore does not have a beginning without a tradition, but it also has no tradition, in the sense of the essential past [*des Ge-wesen*], without the original emergence of the future. This alone already reveals the impossibility of the "system of all systems." Metaphysics as reenactment does not allow us to slip into a historicism that simply records events or loses itself in the absolute system, because the condition of its possibility is determined in its truth precisely when we overcome the essentialization of being and unmask the ontological vacillation as the field of the system of all systems.

The truth of the "to be" does not show itself in being's clinging to itself in ideality, whereby it negates its finitization and enables reason apparently to close the difference absolutely; instead, it manifests itself in the ontological difference that cannot be closed in reflection. The exinanitio of being is the logic of thought's reintegration, though this is never able to be determined "rationally," which means in this sense (!) in the terms of essence.

But in the metaphysics as reenactment, the process of thinking is brought back to the original root from which it proceeds and thus remains historical through and through, because it bears witness precisely therein to the superessentiality of what it presupposes in its original sharpness.

Nevertheless, the condition of possibility of a genuine uni-versitas of thinking has thus become manifest, which to be sure cannot be arranged in turn in the sphere of the mere verum or falsum, but implies the free decision of the love that is obedient to being, a decision that cannot be determined in reflection. This love is what first roots thinking in the corresponding depths of being's movement of finitization. It therefore does not allow itself to be calculated, codified, or made into a thing of the past.

Because the superessentiality of the "to be" unveils its most profound depths in matter's nonessential potency-for-concrete-existence, metaphysics as reenactment also aims at the material cosmos and is historical decision through and through, but for this reason is fundamentally the theme of ethics. But this ethics of reintegration conceives matter speculatively in such a way that, in the release of matter, with a view to the "significance of the little one," it is able to take the risk of precisely the most extreme a priori speculation: obedience with respect to the superessentiality of the "to be," love "in the midst of the world."

But when being is substantialized, by contrast, even matter falls under the absolute control of thought. What is at issue here is not a material segment of reality, but the material world simpliciter, since what is at issue in the pseudo-subsistence is "the 'to be' as such." The release of the superessentiality of being, however, liberates matter from its conceptual mastery by the logicized spirit (cf. Part B, chap. II.2.B, this volume).

Now, conversely, it is by reason in anti-time and anti-space that matter has become the potency-for-concrete-existence of the being that belongs to this perverted spatiotemporality and turned into the ground in which the absolute system of the closed difference has its roots (cf. Part A, chap. VIII.3, this volume). For this reason, the liberation of the dimension of being's superessentiality has to be ordered to that center of man in anti-time and anti-space that unveils the openness of the obedience of being in the spirit: the incarnation of the spirit, thought's becoming flesh in the pull of being's transnihilation, in which—precisely in moments like today—what is at issue is the crisis of being as being that has been made explicit (!), matter—that is, the entire material cosmos—is involved in a profoundly mysterious way in the fate of man. Metaphysics as reenactment thus stands originally in the front line against anti-time and anti-space, which shake it in its depths. Thus the logicized spirit will spare no means in its attempt to annihilate thinking in the superessentiality of being.

There are only two ways that this can happen. Either the genuine thinker gradually turns into the bondservant [*zum Leib-eigenen*; literally, one whose body is the property of another] of anti-time, which attempts to place the freeman, the free body of the free man, in thrall to the sovereign pseudo-subsistence of being, insofar as it makes man unable to carry out the concrete enactment of existence in the material dimension or, in other words, it kills him.

Or the logicized spirit attempts with every means available to lead super-essential thinking into the ambiguity of the "Yes and No at once," insofar as it allows the genuine thinker to be ambiguously "wholly himself," "wholly human" in the apprehension of being as being, in order gradually to resettle thinking in the hypostasis of being and to subject every realm of existence to the "Yes and No at once."

This process goes hand in hand with the enfeeblement of the Father; indeed, the inner systematic of this course of events is nothing other than the speculative a priori that conceives God as the act of the negation of negation and seeks to determine God in this sense as "Spirit." On the basis of supernatural revelation, we can say: Just as the hypostasis of being is ruptured in the exinanitio and resurrection of the incarnate Logos and thus being's movement of finitization is sublated and recapitulated, so too the Antichrist, in the hubris of the hypostasis of being and by means of the negation of the exinanitio, recapitulates ontological spatiotemporality into anti-space and -time, in which he sets up his kingdom. But at the same time, he recapitulates in himself all the disobedience of thought with respect to the necessary sense of being, the whole of logicized love.

Whoever reflects on the abyssal decisions that have opened themselves up to us in the present age will be able to understand their metaphysical illumination along this path. It is not difficult to see that it concerns not just some part of the world, but the entire cosmos, for what is at stake is the metaphysical liberation and determination of matter as such, the undergoing of the crisis of being in an eminent sense. Thus the enabling ground of matter, which is originally related to the abyss of being's goodness, comes into play in an unsuspected way.

But if man has negated the act of obedience in the material dimension by erecting the vacillation of being, then he also runs the risk of matter unveiling the "poverty" of being as the seal of its exinanitio, so to speak, "on its own" as nonessential potency-for-concrete-existence, and plunging hubristic thinking, which seeks to make matter compliant to the anti-God in the will to power, into an unsuspected distress [*Not*], thus shaking the foundation.

In this horrifying "explosion of matter," which God wants to prevent, thinking is nevertheless able to find what is "needed" to relieve its distress [*das Not-wendige*], to undo its identification with the vacillation of being and to overcome the logicizing of the "spirit." It is, however, only those who thinkingly—which means thankingly—love who are capable of setting matter free in such a way that man is newly sent, "through" matter, out of being's exinanitio and into his being-in-the-world.

4. Man in the Crisis of Being

A. Man as the One Who Gives Direction [*die Richte*] to Being's Movement of Finitization: The *Über-Mensch*

From what we have said so far, one could get the impression that being has now been wholly reminted as an anthropological category. But once we deepen the perspective, we come to see that, when being becomes explicit in the image of man, its superessentiality becomes evident, and this negates its immediate determination to man's essence. Man's proper self-enactment from out of the movement of finitization makes evident that he can never make being dependent [*vernotwendigen*] on his essence, any more than the angel can. In his undergoing of the ontological difference, man reveals that, to put it pointedly, being as being first of all has nothing to do with man's essence! Being is *simpliciter superius ad esse hominem*.[82]

There seems to be a contradiction in this. On the one hand, we are saying that man is the normative pattern of being's self-finitization. But on the other hand, we are saying that being has first of all nothing to do with man's essence.

This "contradiction" is something we have encountered before. It was expressed thus: Being, as the highest likeness of God, nevertheless does not subsist; it is infinite actuality in nonsubsistence.

But reason, "which makes man man,"[83] draws its sustenance from this luminous night of being. Now, creation is "emanatio *totius* esse." Is there not a danger, here, of believing human reason capable of determining being in relation to himself in such a way that it comes to subsistence "through" him, and indeed on the basis of reason? This was the great temptation we saw earlier, the ambiguity of the "nothing" as reason's "measuring ground" (cf. Part A, chap. VI.1.A, this volume). Reason appeared to have the power, by virtue of its potentiality and "emptiness," to measure being "as such," that is, to have the capacity to let being be "pure actuality and positivity."

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[82] *ST* 3.16.9.2.
[83] *Met.* 1.1.2.

But in truth, it is precisely man's essential task to withstand this temptation and to bear witness to being's not clinging to itself in the enactment of his self-actualization. The very fact of reason's radically undergoing of being's movement of finitization and its revelation of man as the focal point of this movement is what shows us unequivocally that man is not *similitudo totius entis*. At the same time, because spirit is able to let being be positively "itself" on the basis of the crisis and in obedience to the necessary sense of being, it constantly faces the temptation to posit itself as the origin and the center of creation in an absolute sense: "Now, since all knowledge is brought about by way of likeness, the intellect cannot know its object wholly unless it has in itself the likeness of all being and of all its differences."[84] To say that ens is reason's *objectum proprium* is to show the extent to which the embodied spirit is able to overlook its essence precisely when it is "entirely itself" in the apprehension of being as being, and thus, in its foregrasp out toward being, fail to take over the transnihilation of being in obedience. In the obedient acceptance of being as love, by contrast, knowledge experiences its metaphysical judgment. The disobedience that refuses this acceptance posits the hypostasis of being and degrades love into a function of reason, which now in turn "hands over" being to subsistence, but a subsistence of the second order, beyond the subsistence enacted out of the true transnihilation. Love becomes pneumatic energy, which inspires reason to this enactment of the second-order movement into subsistence. To be sure, as love it aims at the bonum in the *subsisting* res, which now comes to lie completely in the medium of the consciousness of subjectivity. Here, man has brought the crisis of being to decision absolutely in relation to himself and "mediated" being in a perverted way by himself to the entity that he himself is not.

But love and knowledge stand under judgment as a result of the true transnihilation of being, so that reason, to be sure, carries out being's movement of finitization, but not exclusively into itself. Logicized love is delogicized as a result of being's exinanitio, it aims at the *bonum in re*, and, in its extroversion to the entity, pronounces judgment on the introverted act of consciousness, so that it no longer encounters the subsisting res only as something "given in itself," which is stored in the medium of consciousness. If this were not the case, then reason would pretend to be the *similitudo totius entis et omnium differentiarum eius*. "But such a likeness of all being, can be nothing other than an infinite nature: a nature not determined to some species or genus of being, but the universal principle of all being and the power productive of all being; and this ... is the divine nature alone. Indeed, no other nature can be the universal likeness of all being."[85] But reason identifies itself with God when it imagines that it is able to come to know by means of the *similitudo totius entis*; it utters being's logos from its own mouth.

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[84] *SCG* 2.98.

If one were thus to claim, in view of the intellectus apprehensivus entis, that man is "wholly himself" precisely when he thinks and must therefore strive after the apprehension of being as being "by all available means," then one has misunderstood man's essence.

From this false perspective, man is thus "wholly himself" or "man," when he is an Über-*Mensch*, that is, more than a man. He is never himself when he is merely "himself." With this pseudo-form of being a self, however, what is intended is the ambiguous foregrasp of the spirit out into being as being. Man is therefore actually "man" when he is an Über-Mensch, that is, when he apprehends being as being, or in other words the movement of finitization as the theme of his existence, in such a way that the superessentiality (!) of the "to be" gets unveiled precisely as man's *essence*!

But if man takes himself seriously, then his original task of giving reception to being remains allotted to him: he must undergo the distress of the crisis of being thinkingly, but relieve it in obedience to the necessary sense of being and thus thankingly to "set free" being itself: "To be simply is higher than to be man."[86] "To be, among all the other participations of divine goodness, such as to live and to understand, and things of that sort, *is first and in a certain sense the principle of the others, since it has in itself all the other predicates according to a certain united mode.*"[87]

But because man brings the crisis of being to expression in his self-enactment, he opens up in his existence that which is united in being and thus gathers together all that is in himself, since the explication of human existence is always already folded back into the unity of being through reason's openness to being and is affirmed as such. Because being, from out of the crisis, is not established exclusively in view of man's essence, then the unfolding of that which is enfolded in being through man at the same time implies a liberation of the whole creation in thinking as thanking. It is "as thanking" precisely because the ex-egesis [*Aus-legung*] of that which is enfolded in being does not come about in the sense of the deductive demonstration of a principle in its conclusions, but instead according to the "logic of the exinanitio of being."

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[85] *SCG* 2.98.

[86] *ST* 3.16.9.2.

[87] 1 *Sent.* 8.1.1.

One might nevertheless raise the following question: Is a speculative unfolding in fact possible if it is said, "Being taken simply, as including all perfection of being, *surpasses* life and all that follows it; for thus being itself includes all these"?[88] The transcendence of being over the *subsequentia* ought not to be understood in the sense of a mere sublimation of being in a semblance of superessentiality. If it were, then reason would be able immediately to derive the entity that originates from being. But being does not unfold itself in the ontological difference on the basis of human reason's self-enactment; instead, it does so on the basis of the necessary sense of being, which does not allow itself to be deduced by reflection. Man's self-enactment out of the crisis of being, which originally lays claim on him, comes to completion exclusively in the fact that man apprehends being as gift in such a way that he "lets beings be" "through" himself and in this letting be he lovingly affirms that the ens is called a being on the basis of being and not on the basis of man.

This is significant for the discussion that is now to follow! The issue later will be to open up in the individual phases of being's movement of finitization the possibility of an ever more profound reception of being in the order of the cosmos and to interpret man as the concealed-revealed plumb line of this reception of being. This endeavor, however, will necessarily go astray if we fail to recall that the explication of man's essence is a single Yes to esse's being *simpliciter superius* with respect to man's essence!

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[88] *ST* 1–2.2.5.2.

B. The Angelic Spirit and the Liberation of the Anthropological Paradigm of the Movement of Finitization

As we reflected on the "pure spirit," it became apparent that the angel says Yes to the superessentiality of the "to be" in the enactment of the reception of being as thanksgiving, and thus liberates the dimension of matter. In this way, it opens the full extent of being's movement of finitization.[89] This act of thanksgiving, in which the angel does not remain with itself but turns back to its origin, is at bottom nothing other than the Yes to the focal point of meaning of being's exinanitio: it is a Yes to man. As such, man's existence is "borne" by the existence of the angel, which co-determines and thereby liberates the anthropological paradigm of being's kenosis through its specific interpretation of being's movement of finitization.

But if the "pure spirit" does not refer being exclusively to itself as "pure essence" in its self-enactment, then it thus pronounces a judgment on the hypostasis of being and enters in gratitude into obedience. This obedience as gratitude originally coincides with the thinking of the man who bears witness in the decision of the movement into subsistence to the non-necessity of being's relation to man's essence. Nevertheless, the angel, even though it is pure spirit, does not come to subsistence in a way that covers the full breadth of the movement of finitization, for matter belongs to the entire abyss of this movement, since matter bears witness in an unfathomable way to being as love.

Though the angel does not come to subsistence in the dimension of matter, it nevertheless comes to know itself in truth only when it liberates precisely this matter in gratitude for its being and thus addresses to man the Yes of the love that "lets be." In this way, the angels' decision is made in view of "spirit in the world." It thus opens space for the creation of man, both in the essential as well as in the nonessential potency-for-concrete-existence. What is at issue here for the pure spirit is thus the incarnation, the becoming man, precisely because what is at issue in an eminent sense is itself. It becomes evident that man receives his place "above" the angels in an original way and that, from a metaphysical perspective, he cannot reject this liberating position without in the same moment surrendering his essence. We are able to infer, from this perspective, where these notions would lead if we were now to take into consideration all the temptations that speculative thought underwent in our discussion of ontological spatiotemporality.

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[89] Cf. in this volume Part B, chap. II.2.C, this volume.

C. The Human Powers

Man stands in obedience to the kenosis of being in the same decision as the angel does; in his self-actualization, he nevertheless thinkingly relates the gift of being, not to a "pure essence," but to an incarnate form of essence [*inkarnierte Wesensform*], insofar as matter enters into man's essence as an essentiell determination, even though this determination signifies the introduction of a nonessential (!) potency-for-concrete-existence into the concrete subsistence. From this perspective, it becomes clear that man, as embodied spirit, is open to the superessentiality of the "to be" in an original sense precisely by virtue of his bodiliness. One can therefore say that an "anthropological decision" is thus made in being itself. "Liberated" by pure spirit, man, as the normative pattern of the movement of finitization in the form of the primal division/judgment of existence, pronounces a judgment regarding spirit and matter: "in a certain sense on the horizon and confines of things corporeal and incorporeal,"[90] "existing as it were on the horizon of eternity and time."[91]

But if man brings being's superessentiality to light in an eminent way, then man always already begins in the midst of material, sensible things, for the sake of the total enactment of being's movement of finitization: "All cognition begins in the senses." The beginning in the kenosis of sensibility, the *conversio ad phantasmata*, man's involvement in the never-to-be-recaptured character of historical existence, is the proof and the seal of the embodied spirit's always already having carried out a priori the reception of being, its ontological Yes to being's exinanitio. Man's "lower degree of being" with respect to "pure spirit" therefore ought not to be judged as a fall, but rather shows itself to be the original revelation of the positivity of superessential being itself. The historicity of man has its metaphysical locus precisely here.

We must keep all of this in view if we wish to do justice to the speculative unfolding of the human powers. Along the path we have been following, we have repeatedly run up against the question of the terminus of the powers and have seen that they attain their end in a way that corresponds to the rhythm of being's self-presentation, that is, to the three ontological moments of reality, ideality, and bonicity (cf. Part B, chap. II.1.B, this volume). But because man has always already "lived through" being's movement of finitization in a "single" enactment of his self-actualization and liberated everything that is contained in this, everything that has come to pass from precisely this theme of the kenosis of being, then the powers belong, from their roots, together with the ontological moments of being's self-presentation; indeed, the reality, ideality, and bonicity of being are originally co-determined by the powers that belong to the spirit capax entis. This does not mean, however, that the ontological moments are constituted by the embodied spirit's powers, since such a constitution would presuppose the identification of thinking with being as such.

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[90] *SCG* 2.68.
[91] *SCG* 2.81.

Yet the ontological moments are also not intelligible if they fail to unveil themselves in relation to the finite spirit, which, in its concrete subsistence, has made the thematic of the judgment of existence its own. Being's self-revelation has its speculative origin in the rhythm of precisely this judgment. Just as man's "lower degree of being" is nevertheless the revelation of being's superessential positivity, which comes to light in the fact that man has always already "begun" his self-enactment in the dimension of the senses, so the procession of the powers, which is connected with the "lower degree of being," is to that extent the revelation of the positivity of being in its superessentiality, as the finite spirit adequates itself in this procession to being's exinanitio, in which the fullness of being has its seal.

Because man has always already begun in the dimension of sensibility, the procession of his powers is not limited only to the intellect and will. If matter, too, enters into man's essence as the "co-created" determination, and if the positing of the essence—that is, the essence's reception of being—however, is the com-position [*In-eins-setzung*] of esse and essence in the moment of the always already enduring reality, then man's embodied condition has its terminus in the ontological moment of reality, which is so to speak the outermost externality of his spiritual interiority. Just as being *constituitur per principia essentiae*[92] and as such is always already positive reality, so too is the human spirit, capax entis, always already "spirit in the world." Indeed, it is precisely in the historicity of his being-in-the-world that he bears witness to his openness to superessential esse.

But if the anima intellectiva, as finite spirit, comes toward itself along the path of the finitization of being, and if this event of subsistence, conversely, unfolds itself prior to any "movement" in the positive subsistence of being in the three moments of its self-presentation, then the embodied spirit, in its concrete subsistence, must also have an enabling capacity for [*vermögend*] these three ontological moments. By virtue of the fact that the spirit allows these powers to proceed from itself and in this way empties itself, it determines itself without needing to presuppose itself as "undetermined" in the ideal hypostasis of being. This cannot be emphasized enough. But because, as we have seen, a decision is made at the same time, at one stroke, concerning the concrete subsistence of the entity that man is *not*, and even God's self-enactment, by virtue of the sublation of the ontological difference in God, is "co-enacted" in the lower-degree similitudo of human existence, it follows that the verum is co-determined not only on the basis of the divine intellect, and the bonum on the basis of the voluntas divina, but originally also by the finite spirit's relationship to its intellect and will.

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[92] Cf. *Met.* 4.2.556 and 558.

In the human spirit, however, "The soul's simple *essence* is as the *material element*, while its participated existence is its *formal element*."[93] As anima intellectiva, it has enacted this fundamental relation between being and essence in the explicitness of the movement of finitization *as itself*, and indeed as the procession and positing of the essence, the transnihilation of being through to subsistence and the self-unfolding of subsisting being in the moments of reality, ideality, and bonicity. Because being as being, however, can never be imprisoned by reason in the vacillation with respect to its self-communication in the concrete subsistence or, in other words, because the "to be" subsists in finitude as a result of the *transnihilation*, then the simple quiddity of the anima is made "fluid." If the *formale* (participated being) and *materiale* (the simple quiddity) were isolated in themselves, it would trap man in the absolutized ad-vent or in the pure essential past (cf. Part A, chap. VI.4, this volume). But in the innermost heart of the bonum, man is "there," ideality and reality are placed in the crisis. It thus becomes evident that the concretely subsisting anima cannot recapture itself in a single stroke in self-actualization.[94] The lower degree of being that is connected with the procession of the powers thus results from the ontological Yes to being as love, which has its seal in the moment of being present, in the bonum. It is thus that the absolutized ontological distances are overcome. Just as the procession of the accidents is determined in the ontological moment of bonicity out of the ontological present, so too is the original source of the powers rooted in an eminent sense in the innermost heart of being's bonicity.[95]

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[93] *ST* 1.90.2.1.

[94] Cf. in this volume Part A, chap. VI.4, concerning accidents.

D. Finite Spirit's Self-Determination

i. Spirit's Presupposing Itself as Undetermined for Its Determination

We said that the embodied spirit comes to itself in the enactment of the movement into subsistence. Understanding this statement properly opens up space that allows us to advance along our path.

Being does not determine the spirit "from the outside." When we say, therefore, that the embodied spirit comes to itself in the enactment of being's movement of finitization, then what we mean is that the subsisting anima, which is open to being, cannot suspend itself somewhere beyond being, unless it wants to separate itself in its positive reality from its origin. It must therefore presuppose itself in a certain sense as "undetermined" for its determination, since being as being, which lays claim to it at its origins, is similarly "undetermined" in the sense of the speculative "beginning." The spirit's presupposing itself as "undetermined" for the supervening determination nevertheless does not imply a prior identification of itself with being "as such" in the ideal vacillation. If it did, the anima would no longer need any determination, insofar as it would be able to attribute and mediate all determination to itself by its own forces and would thus necessarily reject the determination that has "come to be" ["*gewordene*"], which stems from the exinanitio of being that can never be logicized.

But pseudo-subsisting being does not finitize itself; it has negated the transnihilation that occurs in and through the essence. Its being undetermined in ideality is always already determined and concretized by virtue of reason's substantialization, so that the finite spirit is able to give itself a determination from this root that it is also simultaneously able to take back.

The finite spirit's self-determination can never begin in pure being as being, but neither can it take the always already enduring sensible reality for its point of departure. The reason for this is that, if the moment of reality is thus absolutized, every determination of being would likewise already be preempted and made into "a thing of the past." In this case, the finite spirit would be unable to presuppose itself as undetermined for its determination. Let us keep in mind that the undetermined state of the finite spirit, which it presupposes for its determination, can never come to lie in the mere medium of embodiment. Mere historicity, too, which has its metaphysical locus in an eminent way in this dimension, becomes an incalculable "thing of the past" and the free play of its undeterminedness, which corresponds to the superessentiality of undetermined being, turns into always already determined fate—that is, mythology—if the "beginning" in the positive reality does not occur in the openness of the onto-logical difference.

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[95] Cf. the connection between "bonum" and "power" [*Ver-"mögen*" = "to like, be fond of"].

We see that the question we encountered in our discussion of the transcendentals arises here as well: How are we to approach being, which is meant to be determined, so that a modus can be expressed that originates from being itself, without something being added to being in the sense of an *extranea natura*? Where is the *ens* supposed to begin in the speculative unfolding: in the crisis of ideality, in the positive reality, or in the destination of bonicity?

The only way we can fathom the depths of being as undetermined for the determination that has speculatively "come to be" in it is in the enactment of the movement of finitization. This does not mean that being is itself in "motion," passing from an "undetermined emptiness" to fulfillment and determination. We already saw through this absurdity earlier. If we root being's self-presentation speculatively in the pull of being's self-finitization, however, we come upon the possibility of a determination of being that expresses nothing that did not always already belong in being without what is coming to expression here already itself having been given the name *ens*.

The "same thing" is discovered in the finite spirit's self-determination, insofar as the spirit reveals itself in its powers according to the rhythm of being's self-presentation. It is always already what it is as finite spirit; that is, it is always already determined and complete a priori. But it has not itself apportioned or fitted this determination to itself. To say it has would be to presuppose the identification of the intellect and the will. The "letting-be" dynamic of the will, its "direct[edness] to things as they exist in themselves,"[96] would be nothing more than knowledge that is extended to the concrete thing while remaining fixed in ideality; it would be pneuma in the medium of consciousness, or logicized "spirit." The intellect would grasp being and the will would ignite and "inspire" it all the way into its self-presentation.

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[96] *ST* 1.19.3.6.

By contrast, the spirit capax entis is able to presuppose itself as undetermined in relation to the determination that occurs to it without it having to sublimate itself, prior to determination, in the dimension of being as such. The determination that has come to inhere in the spirit is sealed in being's transnihilation "through" the essence, in obedience to the necessary sense of being, in love's movement out toward that which man is not, in which man nevertheless lovingly affirms himself as one who is called a "being," a name derived from esse and not one he gives himself. In this sense, and only (!) in this sense, we can say that the spirit gets to the bottom of itself in self-consciousness and is able to presuppose itself as undetermined in relation to a determination that occurs to it: in the procession of the intro-verting intellect and the extroverting will. For this reason, this presupposition can mean nothing other than the spirit's taking itself to be undetermined in the movement of the finitization of "its" being. Because it is in precisely this movement into subsistence of "its" being that the finite spirit is awakened to itself as capax entis, the movement also reveals the innermost root of its life, insofar as the spirit determines itself, in the pull of the very movement into subsistence, in its subsisting determinateness as capable of [*vermögend zu*] the moments of being's self-enactment.[97]

The powers therefore arise from the embodied spirit, since this ex-presses itself, and thus determines itself, as an original whole. To fix the presentation of the spirit's powers speculatively in mere ideality is to take the anima as always already existing as complete and "whole" in the hypostasis of being and to "undifferentiate" the transnihilating kenosis of the powers. In this case, being gathers itself back up and, in doing so, becomes the master of its absolute determination.

It is intrinsically impossible to begin with reality in isolation, because this would imply that being, and along with it the finite spirit, is always already determined and posited as "finished," and would thus annul the crisis of being.

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[97] Similarly, Lavelle says, "The contemplation of being is indistinguishable from the movement by which our spirit generates itself." *Présence Totale*, 34. Lavelle hits even more precisely on what we have in mind when he says, "Reflection shows us how we create ourselves [in the enactment of the movement of finitization!] through an act of participation." *De l'Acte*, 32. Cf. also A. Günther, *Vorschule zur spekulativen Theologie des positiven Christentums: In Briefen* (Vienna, 1846), 105–6: "Self-knowing occurs to be sure as an act of thinking (the content of which is being); but being as such does not occur in that act in which it is first something thought (an object of knowledge) and along with this at the same time something transposed from an original undeterminedness into determination under the name of 'Ego.'" "As the ground of this limitation of spirit in its self-intuition, which is mediated from the outside and for that reason is merely mediated, something else can also, though not easily, be pointed out as the conditioned character of spirit itself, which is simultaneously an undeniable fact of consciousness. What does not simply exist (i.e., what does not exist through itself) cannot manage to reveal itself or express its power (*Kraftäußerung*) by virtue of itself."

Beginning in the absolutized moment of bonicity would necessarily condemn the spirit's self-determination to an infinite process, insofar as the moment of bonitas sets into relief the procession of the powers—for the sake of the self-mediation of the substance, that is, for the sake of coming to itself in actu secundo—in an eminent way. By virtue of this speculative a priori, man gets stuck in the groundlessness of an actio transiens.

The great temptation we inevitably encounter in the effort we described above to uncover the root of the speculative unfolding of the powers is to identify the finite spirit's concrete foregrasp out toward being with the spirit's "having-been-in-the-midst-of-being" that is always already given in concrete subsistence. Because reason is capax entis, it seems to justify finite reason's attempt to determine itself from the perspective of the interpretive field of being as such, whereby it conceptually transforms the determination that it receives into an absolute self-determination.

But if the finite spirit opens itself up to the superessentiality of the "to be," then it is never able to recapture the self-determination of its essence in reflection. It nevertheless does not do justice to being's superessentiality by approaching it as undetermined in the enactment of the spirit's becoming self-conscious, in order to lead the reflective mediation of this indeterminacy to determination. In this case, being's transnihilation, which has always already been carried out in the sense of the mediation to concrete subsistence in actu secundo, would get reduced to spirit's self-determination. To be sure, being's movement of finitization is indeed decided by reason, but it is decided in such a way that being awakens the spirit to this decision and enables it.

It is not being in the pseudo-vacillation that releases the three ontological moments, nor is it the anima that is identified with the hypostasis of being that generates its powers. Instead, the anima that subsists as a result of being's "transnihilation"—that is, the embodied spirit—is the "principle of the powers,"[98] the *origo potentiarum*,[99] and their "originating source" ["*Quellgrund*"].[100]

The origin of the powers is a productivum, but being as being is not a productivum, any more than the posited reality is. It is only when being's movement into subsistence terminates in the moment of bonicity and is decided in the finite subsistence of being that the condition of possibility of the procession of the powers comes to light. But this does not mean that the innermost heart of being's bonitas may be made into the beginning of the speculative unfolding. It is never the "mediating end," which speculative reason is able to recapture in absolute reflection or make into a "thing of the past," in order thus to grasp ideality and reality in just as radical a manner. It is therefore the anima in concrete subsistence that effects [*erwirkt*] the powers, never the anima in the movement into subsistence qua "movement."

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[98] *ST* 1.77.6.

[99] 4 *Sent.* 44.3.3.1.

[100] *ST* 2–2.26.3 and *SCG* 1.68.

If we nevertheless wish to understand this procession of the powers from the embodied spirit and from the substantial ground that is co-affirmed therein, then we have only one way to do so: namely, the finite spirit's speculative self-presupposition for the determination that occurs to it in the enactment of being's movement of finitization.

But now the great danger arises of dissolving the subsisting anima in the enactment of the movement of finitization and presupposing it as undetermined for the determination that occurs to it in the indifferent dimension of being as such.[101] Here, the speculative course of thinking has decided a priori against the kenosis of being that terminates in the concrete subsistence of the ens. Here we must withstand the great temptation to which thinking succumbs when it equates the embodied spirit with reason and determines the spirit's essence in terms of this power, which "has a conceptual capacity for being." Reason's actus secundi in this case reach immediately into being as being and determine the spirit's essence in the return to concrete subsistence, the essence that "is," however, already determined beforehand in its concrete subsistence, since the power of reason in fact first originates from it.

The condition of possibility for the determination of the spirit's original subsistence through the progression from consciousness to self-consciousness in the actus secundi thus originates from the reflective recuperation of the dimension of being that the substance mediates in and through the accidents. It is only when we recapture this mediating dimension of being in reflection, out of which the accidents proceed in which the substance is co-affirmed—or, in other words, only when we logicize it—that we determine the spirit through the progression of consciousness to self-consciousness or we determine the spirit's essence as self-consciousness.

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[101] We believe that this foundation enables a more profound engagement with German Idealism's entire metaphysics of spirit.

But the ontological moment from which the accidents originate in an eminent sense is the good. The reflexive—that is, essentiell—recuperation of the bonum is therefore the condition of possibility not only for the identification of thinking with being in its crisis, but also for the determination of the spirit's essence by the secondary acts of man's actualization. These acts are established on the basis of the foregrasp out toward being as being, which has to be enacted anew at every moment.

This recuperation leads every speculative unfolding of the spirit's powers ad absurdum. We achieve insight into why the powers originate from the substantial ground of the soul only through a speculative undergoing of the crisis of being in its circumincession with the "nothing"; the soul, however, at the same time determines itself in this kenosis without needing to hold itself in the ontological vacillation and presuppose itself, prior to this determination, as a self-withholding essentiell fixum (A = A). Nevertheless, the anima does not get "divided up" in the procession of the powers, just as being, even in "giving itself" ["*aufgibt*"] to beings in the transnihilation, nevertheless remains a "task" ["*Aufgabe*"] for beings. The anima is the *productivum*[102] of the powers and at the same time the *finis*[103] of the powers thus produced; it is "more perfect"[104] than what proceeds from it, insofar as it is an original "actuality." Being is indeed similarly the *perfectio omnium perfectionum*, even though it first comes to subsistence in concrete finitude.

Nevertheless, the anima determines itself in its powers and is therefore fundamentally capable of determination in its causality. This determination of itself as "undetermined" in its giving rise to the powers is nevertheless not the determination of itself as potency, just as being in its self-communication through the essence is received, limited, and constrained, not as a potency but as the *actus actuum*, which is why it determines the potency rather than the potency determining it.

If the anima were thus identified with the undetermined being, then it would not have any need for the procession of the powers and would itself be originally "purest actuality." Because in this case the hypostasized, undetermined being is itself degraded into a potency capable of determination, then the anima would no longer be "more perfect," as the ground that allows the procession of the faculties, but would be instead mere potentiality, which attains its ontological determination only in the "appearance"—in this case, in and through its kenosis in the powers. The spirit would thus be established a priori in a univocal, abstract identity (A = A) for its self-communication and fundamentally enfeebled. But because the spirit's concrete self-mediation comes to pass through the anima's reception in matter, matter's potency-for-concrete-existence turns in this case into the spirit's determining power, in which the spirit bursts open its abstract identity and rises up to the level of spirit in the pain of becoming flesh. It would in this case be nothing but matter that represents the spirit's proper "actuality."

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[102] *ST* 1.77.6.
[103] *ST* 1.77.6.2.
[104] *ST* 1.77.6–7.

Because being and "nothing" exchange themselves for each other, it follows that the kenosis of the infinite abundance of being into the variety and multiplicity of beings—that is, the "lower degree of being" of what is originally *completum et simplex*—is nothing other than the revelation of the positivity of being itself. Precisely because the procession of the powers from the soul unveils the "lower degree of being" that belongs to the *simplex essentia*, this procession is likewise the revelation of spirit's positivity. The necessary sense of being is manifest in both cases. This power bears witness to the positivity of being by negating an originally "complete" whole in the parts and by sublating it—that is, by negating the negation—without the negating being directed to what is originally complete in the sense of a concretely subsisting thing, which would cause the enactment of this dialect to collapse into contradiction.

Whereas in the metaphysics of spirit of an "Augustinian" stamp the emphasis on esse completum et simplex inclines one to conceive the powers more in the sense of the promotio of what is originally whole, which is often fixed a priori as a sort of Platonic idea, the Thomistic metaphysics of spirit aims more genuinely at the transnihilation of this *completum et simplex* in the incarnational pull toward subsistence, which is why here the procession of the powers is understood more in the sense of a deficiency and a lower degree of being. But this lower degree of being precisely takes for granted what is originally "complete" and thus points to the dimension of the *esse completum et simplex* as the *perfectio omnium perfectionum*.

We have seen nevertheless that we can grasp the powers as a positive epiphany [*Durchstoßes*] of the origin—that is, as *promotiones consubstantiales* (Bonaventure)—only if the transnihilation of being is taken seriously, so that the transnihilation in the sense of a deficiency and the positive *promotio* of the powers unveil themselves from out of a single root. All this results from the speculative determination of the convertibility of being and "nothing."[105]

We can therefore say that man's powers originate from the superessential depths of the reception of being, through which the anima intellectiva mediates itself into concrete subsistence. But because the embodied spirit has appropriated this theme of being's self-communication and thus is also able to interpret the measuring ground and the structure of the powers' procession, thinking therefore easily falls into the temptation of identifying the anima, from which the powers spring as from their substantial ground, with the acts of reason.[106]

The unfolding of the spirit's powers occurs in accordance with being's self-presentation in the transcendentals. Because man is the focal point of being's movement of finitization and is ordered, from his very essence, into the ever newly-to-be-made decision of the onto-logical difference, which is the ground of his personhood, Thomas therefore says with profound insight: "To act is not attributed to the nature as agent, but to the person.... Nevertheless, action is attributed to the nature as that whereby the person or hypostasis acts,"[107] and "the powers seem to regard more the person [than the nature] since they are the principles of personal acts."[108] Here the self-determination of the personal, embodied spirit comes in an abyssal way to expression in the enactment of the ontological difference, which reveals its most profound depths in the relationship between person and nature, in the determination of the powers.

ii. Man's Embodied Reality in the Self-Determination of Finite Spirit

Following the pull of the speculative unfolding of the transcendentals, after having interpreted the res, the unum, and the aliquid in the dimension of reality, we have once again entered into the difference between being and beings. Thomas says that we would be unable to posit the consonance of beings unless there were such a thing "the nature of which is to come to agreement with every being: and this is the soul, which is in a certain sense all things."[109] The long path we have taken to this sentence, which we repeat here again, has brought to light the depth behind what Thomas says, and we also understand why he points specifically to the *anima humana*, which is *forma corporis*.

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[105] This is also the perspective from which to conceive the unity between Augustine's and Aquinas's metaphysics of spirit, which we cannot present here in any more detail.

[106] Those who accuse Thomas of always being an "intellectualist" have fallen into this temptation.

[107] *ST* 3.20.1.2.

[108] *ST* 1–2.83.2.2.

The always already embodied character of the spirit came to lie in the positive reality. But if the powers proceed from the anima in correspondence to being's self-enactment in the three moments of its transcendental self-exegesis, then the anima also releases from itself an original power that corresponds to the moment of man's embodied reality. Reason and will enter into act from out of the ground of this power in which they have their roots, a power that is related to the corporeal reality of man's essence or, in other words, to the material reality of his always already having-been-involved-in-the-world.[110] The being of man that the spirit receives and conceives can bring itself to expression only as what it always already "has been": *embodied reality*.

The a priori exegesis of the fundamental theme of human existence thus has its crisis in man's historicity. The apprehension of being, therefore, does not occur on the basis of an ideality that can be retracted into the subject; instead, it rests on man's openness, which has always already existed in his concrete historicity and his attunement to what has been sent to him. The foregrasp out toward being as being comes about on the basis of the outermost enabling dimension—namely, the concretely positive "sensible" reality of being—in which man has always already taken up residence. Reason as a spiritual power, however, does not lie in the material dimension. If it thus perceives the entity nevertheless as a sensible datum, then it is precisely the superessential being, which affirms itself through its outermost, nonessential potency-for-concrete-existence, that enables man, as capax entis, to be "himself" in the material dimension. This beginning "in what is other to himself," in which the impossibility of substantializing being as love in reflection bears witness to itself through the incarnation, as it were, of the spirit, has its seal in the procession of the senses from the intellect: "The senses ... according to their natural origin proceed from the intelligence; ... thus the soul, according as it has the sensitive power, is considered as the subject, and as something material with regard to the intelligence."[111]

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[109] *De ver.* 1.1.

[110] This would be the point of departure for a "metaphysics of feeling" and the various attunements. It would be necessary to inquire into the way in which the difference that has always already been "undergone" in the concrete as determinateness in the dimension of persisting reality becomes manifest in correspondence with the various a priori actualized shapes of man's letting-himself-be out of the ontological difference: self-withholding being, the closed-off essence, the isolation of subjectivity, the enfeeblement of bodiliness or pure "yet to come" eternal longing, rejection of being's transnihilation, retraction into the hypostasis of being, and along with it the original manifestation of "angst," since being is not received by the essence and is therefore not gratefully possessed as having been given, and so forth.

Thus the senses, which have arisen from being's transnihilation through to the concrete subsistence of reason, must manifest in turn the enactment of the basic form of human existence. They must do so insofar as being's superessentiality lays claim to reason, through its kenosis into matter, in an eminent way in the undergoing of precisely this superessentiality.

The way that reason opens itself into the luminous night of being (completum et simplex, sed non subsistens), from out of which it has always already turned to face the positively given corporeal entity that manifests itself in its appearance, is unveiled in "sight": the eye does not open itself to the fullness of the sunlight, or else it would "go blind"; instead, it directs its vision to the various beings that appear and show themselves in the light of the sun. We must keep in mind, however, that reason enters into its operation only as spirit that has always already concretely existed in the positing of reality, out of the kenosis into the "externality" of its being-in-the-world. As embodied spirit, man has always already taken root, through the sense of "touch" [*im "Getast"*], concretely in existence; he has as it were always already gropingly taken hold of the world in his reaching out and found a place to stand [*Boden genommen*]. Just as the positing of reality is the root and ground of the transcendental explication of being, so is "touch" the ground in which the senses are rooted. Thus man enters into knowledge "gropingly" ["*begreifend*"] and grows from this into reason's perceptive grasping.

Being's movement of finitization, however, can be carried out in truth only in listening obedience to the necessary sense of being, which is sealed in the moment of bonicity. In this moment, both the vision of reason and the perceptive indwelling and attunement to the enduring corporeal reality of existence were "sublated" and preserved as original moments of being. Thus we discover that "hearing" is the center between sight and touch, which is inserted into material reality by the dimension of bodiliness and indwells it.

At this point, we need to ask how the concrete, sensible having-of-the-world is always already acted out by the a priori of the experienced ontological difference and the temptations that arise in it—how man is meant to interpret his "being-in-the-world" on the basis specifically of reason's obedience to being, "because of the conjunction [of the powers of the soul] ... in *one existence* (in *uno esse*) composed of the body and the soul."[112] We have to inquire how, in the positing of the positive *corporeal* reality, physical spatiotemporality is attuned on the prior basis of ontological spatiotemporality as it is speculatively dimensioned, and what this means for the concrete act of knowing, insofar as "it understands with *continuity* and *time*, with respect to the phantasms *in which* [!] it considers the intelligible species"[113] and thus "continuity and time are in the soul's intellections."[114] Moreover, we need to ask why and how the "higher and lower powers"—that is, body and soul—"let flow [!] from one to the other whatever superabounds in any one of them,"[115] according to the enactment of being's movement of finitization,[116] how the foregrasp out toward being occurs from out of the always already embodied fundamental disposition of Dasein: "The body is altered by what the soul apprehends"[117] and "the alteration of the body flows over into the soul,"[118] so that the anima embodied in "its" body—says Thomas—"imitates its make-up."[119] We have to ask how the always being attuned to the dimension of embodied reality enables an always specific opening of the movement of finitization—that is, of man's enactment of existence—for "such as a man is by virtue of a corporeal quality, such also does his end seem to him."[120]

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[111] *ST* 1.77.7.

All of this can now be unfolded from the perspective of the dimension opened up earlier as a discrete ontology, an ontology that would prove to be fruitful also for an anthropological study of health and medicine.

We have seen that the intellect gives rise to the senses out of being's "ad-vent" (being's coming toward itself through the outermost enabling dimension of matter). Because it draws its sustenance from this "ad-vent" of being, the intellect comes to itself only when it begins in the other to itself that has originated from it—that is, in sensibility—for "the soul communicates that existence in which it subsists to the corporeal matter, out of which *and the*

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[112] *De ver.* 26.10.
[113] *ST* 1–2.113.7.5; cf. 1 *Sent.* 38.1.3.3.
[114] *De instantibus*, c.1.
[115] *De ver.* 26.10.
[116] Cf. note 110 above.
[117] *De ver.* 26.10.
[118] *De ver.* 26.10.
[119] *De ver.* 26.10.
[120] *ST* 1.83.1.5.

intellectual soul there results unity of existence."[121] In just the same way, being does not affirm itself in pure ideality, but in its transnihilation "through" the essence. But this "essential having-been" ["*Ge-wesen*"]—man's embodied essence, the reality of human Dasein—is what it is only from out of its "advent," that is, out of being's "coming toward" itself.

There is therefore no "pure sensibility" as the beginning of human knowledge without this always already having been pervaded by the luminous depths of being as being disclosed by reason, and indeed from the very first moment of the subsistence of the embodied spirit. It is therefore false to say that reason is something imposed on sensibility from the outside or that a personal "superstructure" is erected on the "opaque" ground of bodiliness. If one were to claim this, then the ontological positing of the reality of human Dasein, to which bodiliness belongs, would be isolated in itself and speculatively separated from the crisis of being. In this case, man's bodily reality, with all its "interiority," would be determined as an "it." What lies behind this claim, all the while, is a secret short-circuiting that relates esse and essence to each other as two "entitative quantities" in the movement of finitization in order subsequently to bring them together in the composite. It is therefore also false to explain that man "develops" or "matures" from a sensible being into a spiritual being. It would be extraordinarily illuminating to consider what light the various temptations that we are able to discern in the anthropological dimension of all the realms of human Dasein can shed on the fields of pedagogy and psychology.

Over and over again, we see that the substantializing of being in modern metaphysics inevitably implies the separation of the hypostasized being from the essence that is posited for it, the neutralizing of the *non subsistens* through the emphasizing of the *completum et simplex* as equally indifferent to the infinite and the finite, and indeed the division of person from nature, of spirit from sensibility, and of a priority from a posteriority, in the human exercise of existence.

We believe that there is no more original metaphysical root from which the question concerning the relation between body and soul, the spirit and the senses, can be answered than from the speculative thematic of being's movement of finitization. Just as being as being never comes to lie in some place outside of the positive reality, so too the intellect capax entis never comes to lie "outside" ["*jenseits*"] of the reality of the body. It would be easy to show how the whole body-soul problematic and the original trials and temptations that come with it have their home in this question of being's movement of finitization, just as do all the questions of the metaphysics of knowledge.

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[121] *ST* 1.76.1.5.

But if we saw that the intellect capax entis can never be cut off and isolated in a place "beyond" the corporeal reality, then this precisely does not mean what one could only too easily present to us as an objection, namely, the collapse of the spirit into sensibility or the dissolution of the anima intellectiva into the dimension of bodiliness. Precisely the opposite is the case!

Just as being never leaves its ideality behind, even though it is "nothing" "beyond" its reality, so too can the body never leave the ideal sphere behind even though, as positive reality, it does not have spirit somehow outside of it. This means that it is the body of the spirit; the spirit has always already had its beginning *as* spirit in the body! Here, to be sure, we encounter the great temptation to understand the spirit as an "effluvium" ["*Ausdünstung*"] of the body, in the sense of naive materialism, which in turn would correspond to the submersion of being in the essence, as we developed it in Part A, chapter VIII.3, in this volume.

It is crucial to keep this in mind, particularly in the context of modern medicine, and even more particularly in the field of neurophysiology, in which the soul has regularly come under attack as *substantia incompleta*. One side rightly affirms the transcendence of the spirit, while by contrast, the other side, with equal justice, affirms its radical immanence in the bodily reality. The disputes here are often fruitless. Precisely because the spirit is "immanent" to the corporeal reality of the body, it is transcendent, in just the same way that one talks cleanly past the crisis of being when one begins beyond the positive reality: it is precisely for the sake of its superessentiality that being is always already blended with the essence in an enduring unity. Everything depends on the proper understanding of the superessentiality of the "to be"!

iii. The Intellect, the Will, and the Faculty for Embodied Reality Considered from Their Source in the Movement of Finitization

We can only enter into the most fundamental details here. Reason can "come toward itself" (being's movement of finitization is the basic outline of reason's self-enactment) only by virtue of the fact that it begins in sensibility. But let us not forget that the intellect can never have its beginning in being "as such"; instead, it apprehends being in the crisis only "from within" the material entity. Reason begins in what always already materially persists and is.

But if the spirit has a capacity for being, then it also has a capacity for what has originated from being as the always already given that "lies before" it in the positive reality. If reason enacts the crisis of being, then it is thus able to "let be" before it the positive reality, insofar as it also has, in a certain sense, capacity for the positive reality on the basis of being's "ad-vent." But we will return to this and discuss it in greater detail when we treat the relationship between reason and understanding.

For now, it is important to see that reason has a capacity for the crisis of being and therefore "can achieve a similitude to being."[122] But if the anima intellectiva in a certain sense opens up the crisis of being, then it does so on the basis of the *quodammodo omnia*. Because it is always already opened up into the crisis of being that has revealed itself to reason, there exists an agreement of one being with another on the basis of the spirit, and indeed in a way that corresponds to the spirit's capacity. Thus, Thomas now says in *De veritate* 1.1, "The soul, however, has both knowing and appetitive powers. *Good* expresses the correspondence of being to the appetitive power, for ... the good is that which all desire. *True* expresses the correspondence of being to the intellect." The intellect, which draws its sustenance from the crisis of being, brings the entity into agreement with itself insofar as it allows being to "lie before it" in subsistence *as a positively finite entity*. It does so by coming toward itself in the enactment of the movement of finitization and in this act—that is, through the decision of the crisis—it is always already resolved in that which it, as embodied anima, presents *in its subsistence*.

But the spirit does not begin at a particular moment to bestow agreement, and then cease the next. If the spirit were able to place itself in its "capacity for being" ["*seinsvermögend*"] next to being as such, then being would be substantialized and would degenerate into a res, but this means that the agreement would be annulled.

It must therefore be said that reason is not able to turn the dimension of being "as such" into its playground, in which it produces the entity and its truth *ad libitum*, for in the grounding of the agreement of the entity with itself—that is, in the mediating progression along the "path" of the finitization of being—reason experiences its *dependence* on the entity that has been posited prior to any speculative enactment of the ontological difference. We thus see what temptations beset thinking when one, with Aquinas, determines the *anima, quae quodammodo est omnia* as the metaphysical root of the agreement of beings with one another.

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[122] Cf. 1 *Sent.* 19.5.1.

Reason carries out the movement of finitization in every adequation to being, wherein the *relatio adaequationis* comes to completion, which in turn represents the *ratio veritatis*.[123] Prior to any apprehension of being as being, reason discovers its dependence on the concrete material entity. In the course of the movement of finitization, reason, as "receptive" anima intellectiva, insofar as it obeys the necessary sense of being, is therefore immediately directed into the positive reality of the finite entity. The spirit stretches itself out toward this reality through the senses that originate in it.

But is the movement of finitization already fully explicated with this step? Does it make do with the apprehension of being as positive finite reality, with the simple grasp of the quiddity and the judgment,[124] in which this grasp comes to completion? Is this judgment sufficient, in which the crisis of being, the speculative "beginning" of the movement of finitization, and the always already positively posited reality are preserved and unveil themselves as dependent on one another and mediated in one another?

No, at this point we have not yet encountered the moment of bonicity! This moment lies beyond ideality and reality, and in it is sealed the necessary sense of being that introduces, animates, and fuels the entire movement of finitization.

Although in a certain sense reason obediently "bears" the crisis of being and fathoms the progression of the movement of finitization, it would have no energy for this undertaking without the faculty of the necessary sense of being. It thus bears witness to this sense, as reason (!), and indeed does so there where it "touches on" the moment of bonicity in the pursuit of the necessary sense of being in the movement into subsistence beyond the positive reality (in the pull of being).

It is only because the finite spirit also has the capacity for the necessary sense of being that it is able to "sustain" the crisis of ideality and that there exists an adequation of reason to being as being and a corresponding pursuit, in obedience to the necessary sense of being, of the movement of finitization—but also the possibility of the presumption of being's pseudo-subsistence, insofar as this power "apparently" justifies the finite spirit in mediating being to sameness with itself already in the crisis of ideality, so that the reason that has preemptively [*vorweg*] (!) been identified with the will drives the undetermined "empty being" as "inseity" into concrete mediation. This is the perversion of human freedom, which has a capacity for the "grounding" sense of being.

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[123] 1 *Sent.* 19.5.1.

[124] The bonum and the will ordered to it already came forth in the speculative unfolding of the primal division of being/the judgment of existence!

But because the necessary sense of being is sealed in the moment of the bonicity of the subsisting res, the faculty with the capacity for the necessary sense of being is revealed as will—that is, as love—which aims at the good.

We encountered this for the first time in the unfolding of judgment (see sections 1.D and E above). What came to light then was the fact that a speculative unfolding of judgment is intrinsically impossible without the will's opening of the good (cf. section 1.D above). But we can see more deeply into the matter now!

Because the spirit as love is related in a particular sense to the superessentiality of being as love, which pronounces judgment over the imprisonment of being in reason insofar as the will aims at the *concretely* subsisting res, reason is therefore able to enact the movement of finitization "obedientially." Just as reason opens being thinkingly "as a whole," without ever being able to receive it simply as being, so too the will stretches itself out originally to "goodness as a whole," which at the same time is sheltered like being in this opening.[125]

Reason brings the movement of finitization to decision from out of the inflaming power of love, which aims at the good. Thus the power of the will allows the embodied spirit, as it turns outward to the concrete (!), to preserve the sensible given; the spirit is able, as reason, to be immanent to the material reality (positive reality) in such a way that it bears witness to its transcendence precisely by this indwelling. But the center of this immanent transcendence and transcendent immanence is the good.

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[125] Cf. *ST* 1.54.2: "But the second action [the whole of which takes place inside the agent] of its own nature has infinity, either simple or relative. As an example of simple infinity, we have the act 'to understand (*intelligere*),' of which the object is 'the true'; and the act 'to will,' of which the object is 'the good'; each of which is convertible with being; and so, to understand and to will, of themselves, bear relation to all things, and each receives its species from its object"!

If in its adequation to the "to be" of beings, however, reason opens up the dimension of the movement of finitization—that is, the ontological difference—it can do so only because the crisis of being has always already been decided in the "moment" of the good and both the ideality and the reality of being in its superessentiality are preserved therein.[126]

This allows Thomas to say, *convenientia ad appetitum exprimit hoc nomen bonum*. Thus love holds reason "open" over the course of the moment of finitization; it inflames reason as it follows this course, just as the necessary sense of being is the element of being's exinanitio. Because we are able to determine the "crisis of being" in the moment of bonicity as we follow the pull toward subsistence, but we are able to determine the bonum only on the basis of agreement with the will, it follows that it is just the will that allows being "to be itself" out of the crisis—just as being, in obedience to the necessary sense of being, "is itself" in finite subsistence on the basis of its convertibility with the "nothing." It is only because reason opens the crisis of being *without* hypostasizing it and the will orders being into finitization—that is, lets it "be" *without* undermining the uncaused character of being (qua being [!] = exemplarity)—that the successful movement of finitization and man's legitimate self-actualization reveal themselves accordingly.

Thus the will originally mediates to every entity the *ratio appetibilis*, insofar as it sets in motion the self-finitization of being as love and "leads it" to the "necessary" destination, the good. It "orders" being "through" the essence into self-sameness—that is, ontological adequation—with itself. This is the ground of human freedom! *Freedom is the original faculty of man's self-determination in the sense of letting oneself be by means of the enactment of the movement of finitization. It is therefore also the faculty to determine all beings in the sense of letting them be: for beings come to themselves by means of the "self-same" decision of the crisis of being in which man interprets himself as the focal point of being's movement of finitization. In this sense, the human will is originally "freedom open all the way to the ground" ["Freiheit zum Grunde"] insofar as what is revealed in the will is the fact that man is able to affirm being as itself in his own enactment of subsistence.*[127]

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[126] Otherwise, "empty being" in the contradiction in ideality would be juxtaposed to a res closed off in itself, and the good, at which love aims, would be nothing more than the absolute reflection of the subject, which would bring this twice-unmediated in-itself-ness into mediation.

[127] "The love that is this relation in which we will that being be." A. Forest, in *Consentement et création*, vol. 1, *Philosophie de l'Esprit* (Paris: Aubiers, 1943), 69.

But the reader has no doubt been growing anxious and feels the need to ask finally: What is all this supposed to mean?! Did we not manage to unfold and properly interpret being's movement of finitization, despite all the dangers and temptations, insofar as we constantly emphasized the fact that being cannot cling to itself in pseudo-subsistence, and that it had to "finitize itself," which is why reason is never able to receive being as being? And now we are saying that the will lets being be "itself," that the will decides the movement of finitization! Is not the absolute "will to power" being proclaimed here? Are not being and spirit being identified with each other here, and being thus delivered over to the "freedom open to the ground"? Is it not the fundamental possibility of the "absolute" deduction that is being claimed here? Are we not simply transforming everything from "intellectualism" into "voluntarism"?

Not in the least! If reason in the adequation to being stretched itself out into being's crisis—indeed, if it drew its life from this crisis, without ever being able to apprehend being as being in the sense of the hypostasis—then it aims beyond the positive reality and into bonicity, where the beings (i.e., the being that is decided in the movement of finitization) are entirely themselves ("is entirely itself"). The will can therefore never aim at being as being in "pure ideality" or in the transcendental horizon of finite subjectivity, if reason only properly sustains being in its superessentiality. But this means that even the will experiences the poverty of the transnihilation—through reason, since reason can never receive being as being! What reason apprehends and receives, it "presupposes" (!) prior to ["*vor-setzt*"; literally, "places before"] the will, just as, conversely, the will itself bears this presupposition, insofar as it pervades and co-decides the finitization of being, on the basis of the enactment of which reason places the appetibile before the will. Thus the will as love brings the movement of finitization "obediently" into the "destining" of the good: Indeed, the proper obedience of reason is sealed in the "listening obedience" of love, whose act of "letting be" is ultimately nothing but the Yes to the self-emptying being that refuses to cling to itself, the being that is love.

The necessary sense of being is the proper "ground" of the superessentiality of the "to be." But if the necessary sense of being is unveiled precisely in the good, then the will possesses the "basic trait" of superessentiality in itself. It comes to perfection in love: that is, in the Yes to being!

Because the will fuels and sustains the entire movement of finitization and thus enables the agreement of the entity with itself, insofar as it aims at the good, wherein the entity in being present unveils itself as an appetibile, we thus see how the proper decisions concerning the temptations of thought in the meta-essentiell dimension of the metaphysical "now" are made, a moment that withdraws itself from every logicizing calculation and can only be undergone "in obedience."

This is the way in which reason and will are originally ordered to each other and open to each other. There is no act of will without the opened "crisis of ideality," which reason sustains and enables; the latter in turn does not come to decision through reason without the will, which strives after the good.

The intrinsic relationship between reason and will is nevertheless able to be determined together with man's capacity for bodily reality, which is related to the dimension of the "inexpressibility of the inseity" of reality, insofar as this is always already enduring givenness and in a certain sense has the explicitness of ideality behind it. Reason and will have their roots in a single power, which resides in the "inseity" of the positive reality. Just as (!) this power is always already attuned to the always already persisting "being there" ["*Dasein*"] that reflection cannot recuperate, so too the intellect brings the crisis of being to decision, the will attains the good, and the intensity and the extensity of "letting be" takes its measure. The "freedom open all the way to the ground," however, insofar as man trains in it—that is, exercises love—purifies in the opposite sense the proper decision of the crisis of being, the cognitional return of reason to itself, and thus allows the positive reality "newly" to come about as a positing, without being able to determine it fundamentally as a positing by virtue of its own power.

It is not difficult to see that intellect and will cannot be speculatively unfolded if we fail to differentiate the positing of the corporeal reality. Human Dasein's fundamental attunement comes to light in this dimension.

Here, we would have to unfold the entire depths of the *memoria* in the sense of the spirit's recollected having-been-with-itself, which is something we cannot enter into in the present context.

iv. An Indication of the Temptations That Occur When Man Enacts His Existence in Thinking and Willing

What results from this transcendental "deduction" of man is the possibility of bringing an almost endlessly vast number of insights from individual disciplines back to the original root from which they spring. The unfolding of the movement of finitization in its original thematic provides an opportunity to conceive the various images of man from the perspective of a unifying source. Along these lines, we come to see the further consequences that befall the thinking that succumbs to temptation, and the path that it follows out to the end. If one introduces ontological spatiotemporality in this context, moreover, then unsuspected possibilities arise for a "metaphysics as reenactment."

We begin to understand how the intellect that draws its sustenance from the luminous night of the crisis of being "lets being come to itself" through the decision of the will. Thus the "freedom open all the way to the ground" comes to expression from out of an impenetrable mystery, from which there arises a constantly new perception of what is. The decision of the movement of finitization, however, can historically "open up access" ["*aufgehen*"] to the intellect only in the positively posited reality, and "be" positive reality "for it." Thus man finds himself, in the original enactment of his existence, always already involved in "reality," that is, in "his world." But the will "orders" being out of the crisis into finitude and thus carries out the "positing," the crisis of which in ideality reason opens up to it. The will therefore "determines" the positive positing or the reality out toward which the intellect stretches itself! But this does not happen without complication. If man establishes himself in the dimension of hypostasized being, he presumes to posit being in an absolute way and to determine the positive reality in an absolute way. In this case, the innermost heart of the good shifts into ideality, and reason and will merge into each other so intensively that the good leaps over the positive reality. But the essence lies in the positive reality, in which being's *obedience* to its necessary sense is proven and the exinanitio is sealed. We thus see that what is at issue here at bottom is the forgetfulness of the being that may never be substantialized prior to the transnihilation.

It is not a matter of indifference whether the intellect in the apprehension of being, moved by the will, succumbs to the temptation to hypostasize being and to isolate the positing of the essence in its unity *per seipsam*! In this case, an ever different "reality" captures man, an ever different "world" is thereby ontologically "produced/temporalized," namely, the world of "anti-space and anti-time," which is the home of perverted thinking. This does *not* mean that man makes the "world," that he "worlds" the world, that he allows the world to proceed from himself! Nevertheless, the will decides man's self-determination always already "together" with the letting be of the world and of the ever different intensity of the "Yes" to God, since the decision of the ontological difference is determined by the same stroke also in God.

We see what powerful perspectives are unlocked here and what possibilities open up: now, in a "metaphysics as reenactment," the specific structures of the "world" are carried back into their root, and precisely today, when it becomes clear where thought ends up when it essentializes being—that is, a thinking that the will—in its capacity for the "kenotic" ["*entäußernden*"] power of being, identifies with being in the ideal vacillation. The love that has grown cold has banished the necessary sense of being and annulled the movement of finitization. Thus it is no longer will that becomes one with the necessary sense of being, but the anti-will, which together with the anti-intellect in the ideal hypostasis has become the anti-God.

There would be a lot to say on this score. For the sake of the desired unity of the progress of thought here, however, we must break things off at this point. The most essential has been said. But now we have to show that the will brings the movement of finitization to decision; that is, it wills the beings without positing them in being, and that the intellect receives being without being able to hypostasize it in the ideal vacillation or "entrap" it.

v. The Will in the Intellect's Exitus and Reditus

Thomas says, "the intellect considers its object according to the common ratio of being (*communem rationem entis*)."[128] Reason enters into its operation from out of the luminous night of being. But because the crisis of being has always already been decided in the subsisting entity, then the undergoing of the vertical ontological difference, as we have already seen, is concretely interpreted in the *conversio ad phantasmata* and the *reditio ad essentiam*. Because the spirit's self-embodiment originates in the kenosis of being, which it cannot keep pent up in itself, we cannot understand the spirit's immanence in "its" body radically enough.

It is true that finite reason has to "*have been essentially*" always already with being. "Actual" reason does not take a single step toward being as being from the "nothing," except insofar as it has been always already guided and enabled by being itself.

But if we take seriously reason's having-already-been-with-being, then we have to see that, in this "having-been," being's transnihilation "through" the essence in ontological obedience has always already been given as well: in other words, the nonsubsistence of the "to be" has been carried to term [*zum Austrag gekommen*]. Thus being, which as the light of being has awakened reason to itself, always already takes man with it; it brings reason onto the path where being subsists as concrete material res. Aquinas's sentence "Our intellect naturally knows being"[129] does *not* eliminate the "*conversio* ad phantasmata"—that is, the turning toward the res materialis or the quiddity of the corporeal entity as the proper object of the human intellect—but first *makes it possible* in its *intensity*. Being does not separate itself over against matter in an essentiell way like a Platonic idea, but opens matter and form up to each other. It makes the quiddity fluid and connects it to the unifying ground of its subsistence, so that Thomas can say, "The soul is united to the body *for the sake of* (*propter*) (!) intellection."[130]

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[128] *ST* 1.79.7.

And because in this incarnational pull of the human spirit, which is illuminated by the unstinting self-giving of God's highest gift and is included in the decision concerning God's not being closed up in himself as an absolute, univocal essence—such an essence would keep being *next to* or with itself and so would not allow it to be given in a radical sense—then God's absolute self-communication, which as *ipsum esse subsistens* is self-giving love, opens up to thinking precisely in the *conversio ad phantasmata*, even if in a hidden way. But if the spirit were to imprison being in itself—that is, fix it in a hypostasis—and reject embodiment, then this decision would imply a "jealous" God. This God would be merely "demanding," which is why Thomas also says, "The soul as united with the body is more similar to God than when it is separated from the body, because it is in more perfect possession of *its nature*"[131] and "when our knowledge of images is impeded, we must be completely incapable of knowing anything with our intellect even about divine things."[132] Thus, in the intellect's kenotic exitus, the phantasms remain "the permanent . . . foundation of the intellectual operation."[133]

But in the enactment of being's movement of finitization, reason has not brought being to itself in an absolute sense; the decision regarding being's movement into subsistence is also necessarily a decision regarding the entities as "*other*." Because the will as love orders being out of the crisis into finitude and thus carries out the "positing," it does not enact an absolute in-clusion of the entities in reason's reception; instead, it aims at the things that exist and thus necessarily directs itself "toward the outside," just as in this act at the same time man affirms himself in his being on the basis of the reception of being in concrete subsistence!

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[129] *SCG* 2.83.

[130] *An.* 8.15.

[131] *De pot.* 5.10.5.

[132] *In de Trinit.* 6.2.5.

[133] *In de Trinit.* 6.2.5.

Thinking that is founded on substantialized being would remain stuck in the in-turning movement [*Verinnerung*] in its return to itself; the will would no longer need to strive after the things that are and to turn outward, because it would be able to mediate being into subsistence, that is, into the resoluteness toward itself in the moment of bonitas already in the dimension of the consciousness that governed thinking. In reality, reason must necessarily turn outward once again from its return to itself toward that which lies given before it. It is not able to receive all being into itself in a single enactment of the movement of finitization; it must enact and undergo the giving of being in every moment anew, and it is never able to close the ontological difference in "absolute knowledge."

Yet this is just what becomes evident in the extro-version of the will.[134] The reality and the ideality of being are preserved in the good. The impossibility of the absolute internalization [*Verinnerung*] of the entity and of the embodied spirit in the return to itself thus bears witness to itself in the spirit's extroversion and its turning *ad phantasmata*. It is here that the will comes originally into play.

Because reason carries out the self-affirmation [*Sich-selbst-behaupten*] of nonsubsistent being in precisely this act of extro-version and intro-version, it allows the senses to proceed from it as its original, "nonessential" enabling dimension. In this turning toward the sensibly given, reason thus manifests its obedience to the *superessentiality* of the "to be." But insofar as it intellectually internalizes the entities in the metaphysical pursuit of being's movement of finitization, which is the same thing as its "return-to-itself" or "return-into-its-own-essence," then the outward turn to that which lies before reason, the Yes to history, is given as sealed precisely in this return, which is similarly animated by the will. Therefore the true and the false lie in reason, while the good lies in the things themselves, as Thomas says. Reason's receptive internalization is possible only on the basis of the sustaining power of the will, which seeks the good and in the same way enables reason's simultaneous intro-version and extro-version, even though reason is what first of all opens up this "enabling" for the will. "Hence the intellect moves the will in the way in which an end is said to move—by conceiving beforehand the reason for acting and proposing it to the will."[135] This is what then allows ontological spatiotemporality to enter into the reciprocity of the powers and shows how the reception of being is generated/temporalized [*zeitigt*] concretely in the *conversio ad phantasmata* and *reditio ad essentiam* of the embodied spirit and how it actualizes history.

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[134] Blondel had a deep insight into this. "Moral heteronomy is the necessary complement of the autonomy of the will. For what counts on the whole is not to will what we are, it is to be what we will, separated as we are from ourselves, so to speak, by an immense abyss; and this abyss we must cross over before finally being such, absolutely such, as what we require of ourselves." *L'Action*, 135. [Oliva Blanchette, trans., *Action (1893): Essay on a Critique of Life and a Science of Practice* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 137.] "We are forced to will to become what we can neither attain nor possess by ourselves. What a strange exigency. It is because I have the ambition of being infinitely that I feel my powerlessness: I did not make myself, I cannot do what I will, I am constrained to surpass myself; and at the same time, I can recognize this fundamental infirmity only by having a sense already of the means to overcome it, by the acknowledgment of an Other within me, by the substitution of another will for mine" (354) [327].

vi. The "Poverty" of the Intellect and the Will

Thus the more originally the intellect assures itself of the "riches" of the hypostasis of being, the more radically being inserts itself into thinking "next to" beings and turns into a concept, and indeed the more sharply the res, as a thing closed up in itself, stands forth in turn over against this concept.

On the one hand, the res steels itself against its being dissolved by the reason that is stuck in the vacillation of being, but on the other hand, the res has always already been superseded by this reason and "recast"—that is, mediated—insofar as thinking has usurped the source of being, out of which the res is posited. This always already achieved mediation is then reenacted by the contradiction, which is posited by substantialized being as the ultimate and "outermost" beginning. Beginning and end join together in absolute knowledge.

The res, closed up in itself, drives thinking back into the autarkic subject. The only way the intellect is able to internalize the res is by way of a theft: intellection occurs by means of a repraesentatio that has been reconstituted in the will to power. The hypostasized light of being illuminates the possible intellect in an immediate way; the intellect no longer apprehends but instead turns into a merely *spontane* ratio. Because, as a result of the overemphasized "positing of the essence," the self-enclosed res resists coming to appearance and being externalized in the accidents (bonum = being present!), the only thing that remains is the self-enclosed substantial core as a thing-in-itself = X; but sensibility, as the enabling dimension of the spirit's self-enactment, gets cut off, it loses its a priori perfection, which has its ground in the spirit's super-essential disclosedness in being, and, in its mere receptivity, the spirit comes to agreement with the appearance of things, through and in which the substantial ground no longer co-affirms itself, or is co-affirmed.

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[135] *De ver.* 22.12.

There is therefore a connection between thought's coming to rest in factical reality and self-withholding ideality. Being is brought into a subsistence "of the second order" inside of the subject in the enactment of the spirit's return to itself, and self-outpouring love is bound back to isolated subjectivity in the subject's progression from consciousness to self-consciousness.

But in the good, being unveiled itself (on the basis of the moment of being-present) as appetible, something to strive for. This is why love, which now becomes manifest in its entire depths, pronounces judgment on reason's introverted enactment of the *conceptio entis*, insofar as it determines that the movement into subsistence on the basis of being's exinanitio does not allow itself in this case to be carried out simply in subjectivity. Instead, being's movement allows finite subjectivity *to be* itself and to claim itself precisely in the will directed to what is other than itself. The "poverty of the intellect," which refuses to lay claim to the vacillation of being for itself but rather externalizes itself in the senses, now stands out in sharper relief in the "poverty of the will."

For the good does not add "any negation" to being;[136] instead, it unveils itself in pure, affirmative *positione*,[137] in which all negation is negated and completed being manifests itself as *perfectum*.[138]

Because being enjoys a unity with itself in this way and has decided for itself in favor of fullness, it is able, on the basis of the degree of being that corresponds to the hierarchy of natures, to make the will "poor"—as "poor" as that which strives after *being* (!) can be. It is, in other words, able to release the will into its own neediness, to empty it, in order to draw the will to itself as end. It is only on the basis of this poverty that the will can let being "be itself," without making it a mere function or extension of an intellect that is imprisoned in the hypostasized ontological vacillation.

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[136] *De ver.* 21.5.7.

[137] *De ver.* 21.5.7.

[138] Cf. *ST* 1.5.4.

The *superabundance of love* in the Yes to being thus results from the enactment of the movement into subsistence, which occurs through the intellect that opens being itself to the will in the crisis. But the will is not able to direct itself to being (!), even though in its aiming at being's concrete subsistence, on the basis of which the res can be determined as bonum, it in a certain sense orders being itself into finitization and (thus affirming all that exists) lets being be.

The "poverty" of love is in fact nothing but the ultimate seal of its superabundant wealth. For it cannot make the entity's concrete subsistence an extension of the pseudo-hypostasis of being, but rather is always already called out of the finitization of being through the abyss of transnihilation or the "not" of the ontological difference and toward the other, of which it is not itself the source.

Insofar as it is the proof of being's properly enacted movement into subsistence, this groundless abyss is what provides the foundation for the true and the res in the *good* and thus entities' "being present"[139] in their self-disclosure and their self-bestowal to one another. The distance this abyss opens up is the seal of the nearness of what turns to face one, what is present [*Gegen-wärtigen*].

The will and the love in which it comes to completion therefore reveal their essence in the utmost poverty possible. In other words, just as the intellectus capax *entis* makes manifest in its de-essentialized poverty the super-essentiality of the "to be" that is unbounded by any "essentiality," so too does the "poor" will, which aims at the good, affirm the pure interiority of subsisting being that rejects all negativity. It is in the position to affirm the various things that are according to the hierarchy of being on the basis of reason's enactment of the movement of finitization without itself having to remain "outside," for "love reshapes the lover in the image of the beloved."[140] In this "Yes," however, which penetrates into and touches the innermost heart of being in the good, the will allows "*to be*" in such a way that the "Yes" accrues to beings as if growing out of their *own* interior depths and is granted and preserved out of the poverty of the will that holds nothing back for itself.

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[139] Cf. Part A, chap. VII.1, this volume.

[140] *Ma.* 6.1.13.

In the boundless poverty of its dynamic, the selfless will—which is what the will is by its essence—by means of the eye of reason that has been awakened by the light of being and enabled to cast its glance toward the things that are, releases all being into its concrete self-standing. It is this loving "standing true" in being, wherein all understanding has its ground, which is to say: it is *fidelity* [*Treue*]!

But the will does not remain true in order that it might allow the beings to stand simply for their own sake (letting be in the sense of laissez-faire); instead, insofar as it, as love, roots itself in the poverty of the intellectus capax entis, the will allows all being positively to be itself and inspires self-standing in the poverty of its permitting entry [*Ge-lassenheit*] into subsistence.

5. The World of Man and Man as the Normative Pattern for the Cosmos

A. Man's Liberation of the Entire Movement of Finitization—As Creation

But if man enacts the movement of finitization properly—that is, if he determines himself in truth as the one who gives direction to being's communication—then he can never gather up being exclusively into his own essence and concentrate it there. He "can" do such a thing only if he determines the emptiness of reason as *quodammodo omnia* in such a way that he takes this "fundamental measure" as a tool that empowers him to survey the full breadth of being as being, so that being has nothing left to it that hasn't been thus assessed. In this case, the poverty of love is perverted into the will to power!

With this perversion, being as being is surveyed and determined only *in appearance*, but being's superessentiality is completely annihilated. The proper enactment of the belonging together of being and man thus manifests itself "through" the poverty of the intellect and the will in gratitude: in the setting free of all beings, indeed, in the "free gift of God" through love, which, as ultimately poor with respect to the absolute fullness of subsistent being, is also taken up into the infinite superabundance that allows it to love just as God loved us. The fundamental act of human existence is gratitude; it is the *thinking* as *thanking*, which represents the original operation [*Ur-gedanke*] of the intellectus apprehensivus entis that makes man what he is.

In this gratitude, man thus sets the whole of creation free as the "other," even though he unveils himself therein—that is, in this setting free—as the normative pattern and the guiding theme of the gift of being. If he did not give thanks, he would produce all of being's truth out of himself in the hubris of being's pseudo-subsistence. The profound obedience to the necessary sense of being proves itself in the thinking that is thanking, and this obedience enables man to enact being's movement of finitization in speculation and to determine himself as the pattern to which the movement seeks to conform, in a world-full way [*welthaft*]. At the same time, it reveals that man has a need to set the "other" free *by receiving him*, even as this other comes to decision and subsistence in precisely "the same" movement of finitization. Here it becomes clear that man owes himself to another and unveils himself as the focal point of being's movement of finitization only in giving thanks.

Thus, when we said that it is man's task to undergo the crisis of being, what we meant is that man, as embodied spirit, is subsistent gratitude, or is the freedom that lets-be in "being-there" [*im "Dasein"*]!

Let us keep in mind that, in the end, there is only *one* movement of finitization, since creation is the procession of the "whole" of being from God, and that man, insofar as he presents himself as the blueprint of being's exinanitio, by the same token also makes manifest the form that creation is meant analogously to possess. But insofar as this occurs as gratitude, it is not a usurpation of being in the ideality of spirit, but rather the setting free of the "other," which is "itself" and subsists as a result of *the self-same* [*der-selben*] movement of finitization.

All of created being's coming to itself thus, insofar as this coming to itself occurs as being's "incarnational" movement of finitization, also necessarily intends man as that being in which, on the basis of his spiritual "immediacy to being," all of being's self-actualization comes "to speech" explicitly in personal self-enactment. Thomas therefore says in a sentence that contains a whole abyss: "*Return to its own essence* means only that a thing *subsists* in itself."[141] Man unfolds finite being's movement into subsistence and interprets it *in his essence*, which is the basic measure of precisely this movement of finitization. This ultimately means: giving thanks! Only in the thinking that is a thanking does the question of whether man has properly decided what he is come to legitimate expression—and in gratitude, man sets creation free insofar as he decides it *through or by himself*.[142]

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[141] *ST* I.14.2.1.

[142] "The self is not able to posit itself otherwise than by positing the whole of being, in such a way

We see what abyssal perspectives open up here! But we cannot allow ourselves to recoil, and must dare to give expression to what we see. These ideas have not the slightest thing to do with an "anthropologizing" of metaphysics! Quite to the contrary: Here, the original ground of all the temptations that would lead man to anthropologize metaphysics is first laid bare. All these temptations have their ground in the danger that thinking constantly confronts, namely, that of sliding into the ambiguity of a realm of ideality that has been separated from the necessary sense of being. We have attempted to cast a speculative light on being *simpliciter superius ad esse hominem* as the beginning of all reflection; and it is because we have preserved being's superessentiality, even and precisely (!) in relation to the essence of man, that we have been able to follow this path.

Man, as the focal point of creation, thus unveils the *simpliciter superius* of esse *ad esse hominem.*[143]

B. The World of Man

If man is the governing pattern and the focal point of the movement of finitization, then, by maintaining being in the crisis of ideality in obedience to the sense of being, he is able to determine the various enabling grounds of being. Being can be related immediately to the "pure essence," as happens in the constitution of the angelic spirit, which in its self-decision affirms and sets free the superessentiality of being, the movement of finitization, and the focal point of this movement, namely, man. Next, there is the possibility of relating being to a corporeal essence, as happens in the constitution of man, who in the resolve to be himself [*Entscheidung zu sich selbst*] sets free the entire dimension of the movement of finitization and can return to himself from the movement outward. Moreover, there exists the possibility that being be related to a corporeal essence without being able to return to itself, and here too different degrees are possible, culminating in inanimate matter,

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that this whole of being is not posterior to the positing of the self by itself, but is presupposed and implied by it as the condition of its own possibility." Lavelle, *De l'Être*, 12.

[143] What we have just presented is summarized in Thomas's sentence: "Even though God is the universal cause, he remains completely simple. It is therefore more in accord with God that there be a universal effect that exhibits unity, namely, human nature (the essence that belongs [*zusammenge-hört*!] in its openness to being with the ipsum esse as primus effectus Dei), which in a certain sense gathers up all the things of nature, than a universal effect that is not united in a simple way, such as the universe, because its parts do not bring about a simple unity, insofar as they remain actually distinct" (3 *Sent*. 2.1.1.1.c. ad 1). The *reditio ad essentiam*, in which the subsistere—that is, being's movement of finitization—is enacted is thus the event of the *congregatio omnium naturarum* in the act of reason, as well as in the love that lets be.

which is entirely "given over" ["*vergeben*"] to what is other than itself in its activity and its actuality. This path that descends from above, this presentation of the enabling principles of being at the various levels of the movement of finitization, insofar as this movement comes to expression in accordance with the different ways being affirms itself through the essence, harbors an enormous danger! There is never any reduction of being to essence without being's always already having-been-posited-in-unity with the essence as positive reality! It is only reason that is able to determine the "relation" in each case: but, in doing so, it decides against the possibility of isolating this relation, since being is "nothing." If we take this seriously, then the path of the ever deeper reception of being according to the measure of the movement of finitization, which descends "from above," can also be traveled in an ascent from below in the sense of an "ontological evolution," as Thomas presents it in *Summa contra Gentiles* 4.11. We may sketch this path briefly as follows:

Matter is the outermost enabling principle of being. If we take the requisite care in holding onto the dimension of the movement of finitization, then we are able to determine an ever more profound reception of being in matter's nonessential "potency-for-concrete-existence," an ever more profound coming to itself of being in the sense of self-sameness with itself, which becomes manifest in each of the entity's operations: for agere follows upon esse.

In the ever greater depths of being's coming to itself in the enactment of the movement of finitization, we also discover the traces of an ever more original possibility, namely, the possibility of returning to itself. The return to itself thus has its seal in each case in a particular mode of subsistence, "since returning to the essence is nothing other than a thing's subsisting in itself."[144] The structure that provides the measure of the movement of finitization as being's *movement into subsistence* therefore comes to light in the *reditio ad essentiam*, according to the entity in question in each case. Thus there exists the possibility that being, which form gives to matter (by pouring itself out over matter, but at the same time returning back to itself to the extent that it has being in itself), be as it were entirely absorbed [*be-nommen* = "bedazzled"] by the dimension of matter or, in other words, that the self-outpouring of the form over the matter in the giving of being and the return to itself in the possessing of being be entirely subsumed within and circumscribed by the material dimension. This material entity enters into activity only in the other of itself and is in its activity always already in its other insofar as it arrives at its "own subsistence" only in this other.

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[144] *ST* 1.14.2.1.

Every more profound reception of being in the material dimension would at this point have to remain at this corporeal level—that is, it would be able to be classified *only* in this dimension—if we failed to interpret matter as an enabling dimension of being on the basis of being's *superessentiality* and transnihilation but related it instead to the essence alone. For it is the superessentiality that allows the ever deeper reception of being to aim precisely at an ever deeper "coming to itself" of *being*, which is not something erected on the foundation of the material res (!). If matter's origin in being's superessentiality were lost from view, then being's exinanitio would be neutralized; being would be abandoned to the essence, and the ever deeper reception of being would get swallowed up by matter.

Matter in this case does not set free the enabling principle of the "pure essence." It turns into the all-generating absolute "womb"; it produces being from itself, since it no longer itself proceeds from being. Matter in this case brings all existing things into ever more profound subsistence. Here, the "esse *resultans* ex principiis *essentiae*" is played off its superessentiality, and the absolute beginning of evolution occurs in the medium of a matter that has been energized in the dimension of reality. But this corresponds in turn with the being that has been hypostasized, fixed in reason, and rendered into concepts. The maternal womb of matter ejects from itself all that is!

Therefore the same thing applies to the reception of being in nonessential matter as what we saw earlier, since we attempted to investigate man as the essence that most profoundly owes itself to being's movement of finitization: the reception of being is possible only if that which has received being does not relate this being absolutely to itself, but holds it in gratitude insofar as it moves itself back to the origin and thus "sets free" being in its superessentiality.[145]

We have already attempted to illuminate this in reference to angelic being and in man's self-enactment. In the present context, gratitude unveils itself to us also in the outermost externality of matter in a manner that is abyssal in the precise sense of the term [*Abgrund*—essentially, the absence of a ground].

Both the "pure spirit" and the outermost externality of matter are "themselves" only to the extent that they set free the full breadth of being's movement of finitization, which man is in concrete subsistence. It is thus not the case that evolution starts with matter and then eventually transitions to pure spirit; evolution is instead always already "opened" by the "pure spirit" and matter is always already opened to man and "through" him into its "sublation" in God.

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[145] Evolution is thus the enactment of ontological gratitude, which reaches a peak in man!

From its origin, matter therefore "intends" ["*meint*"] being in its superessentiality. Evolution thus does not remain trapped in the realm of the inorganic; instead, it goes beyond "pure matter," while the "pure spirit" imprisoned in substantialized being rejects the vegetative and sensitive dimensions. The "flesh" is a thorn in the side of pure spirit.

But let us keep in mind that being's coming to itself can be determined only in the always already (!) posited higher natures, which as such are more capable of being. Substantialized being is never the endpoint of evolution—that is, evolution does not aim at the ontological vacillation as an ideal it approaches asymptotically—for this would presuppose that being is so completely circumscribed by the principles of essence that evolution had its absolute beginning in matter. If thinking were to fix being as being and hold it in itself in ideality, in order on this basis to determine being's ever deeper coming to itself in the so-called levels of being, then being would not have emptied itself; instead, it would have collapsed into the res and fallen victim to matter; it would be able to come to itself exclusively within the limits that matter sets. The fullness of being would in this case coincide perfectly with the full breadth of matter. And because being has already achieved an identity with itself in ideality, evolution would become a mere semblance. One can therefore take seriously evolution in its dynamic only on the basis of the fullness of being, for this fullness is precisely what provides the ground for being's exinanitio. It is for this reason that creation, precisely because it is a bestowal of "being in its entirety" (totius entis) and is thus entrusted to God, is interpretable "from below," so to speak, as evolution. The undergoing of the finitization of being is already the act of evolution that "produces" man.

The event of being as self-appropriation [*Sich-er-eignen des Seins*] thus continues a further step from pure corporeality to the vegetative level.

The plant, as a living organism, already has a "center" in which it is gathered and from which it can also in a certain sense turn outward. The initial possibility of a return to itself from the outermost externality therefore implies first a certain distance from its "other"—which we see in the intensity of the plant's still somewhat weak act of subsistence; in addition, it enables a relation "from itself" to the other, which we see in the plant's relation to the things other than itself specifically as "environment." The return to self that corresponds to the varying degrees of the capacity for being thus not only implies a taking oneself back from one's "own" externality, but also a reducing of the "other," given as externality, to "one's own" ground.

If being's coming to itself means recuperating itself by claiming itself, being itself, or "self-necessitation," then this occurs with the plant only in a small measure. It unveils this in its activity, in which it bears witness to its being. The "fruit" of the coming to itself (ratio boni) falls entirely outward. The plant casts its seed outward and subsequently makes itself necessary in its other. It arrives at itself only in the "other to itself." There, it extends itself, it receives itself, and comes "again" to itself, insofar as it arrives at actuality. But the dynamic toward itself (in its other) arises from the striving after being as being, which becomes present for matter, so to speak, only through the spirit. It thus becomes a "task," which is why matter seeks the embodied spirit as its "ultimate" destination and form of existence, insofar as it "unifies" itself out of externality in view of embodied spirit.

A more profound coming to itself is unveiled in the animal. With the higher level of organism, the coming to itself and the reproductive self-necessitating are internalized to a greater and greater extent, so that the beings achieve themselves ever more profoundly and recuperate themselves, but thereby bring the externality of the appearance of the "other to itself" back to its corresponding ground in which it is able to have its roots.

In this sense, there occurs at the ever higher levels of being, by virtue of the prior internalizing of the given, a more profound letting be of the other through the appetitus. And because what most originally concerns all actual things is being, what it thirsts for in this pull toward being—that is, in evolution—is that an ever deeper Yes be spoken to it, and thus (also in relation to the appetitus) it thirsts for man, whose loving power in freedom to let beings be is able to will them in terms of what they are.

Let us enter more deeply into this explication! The seed that falls outward with the plant, whereby it makes itself necessary in the "other to itself" and reproduces itself, is increasingly internalized with the individual animal.

But because being's self-communication occurs within the span of the movement of finitization (being and essence), then, insofar as being comes to itself ever more profoundly, and indeed with a view to the explicitness of this theme in man's concrete subsistence, the difference between the principles must also be allowed to become ever *more explicit*. Therefore the achievement of the *act* stands out ever more intensively in and with *potency* in the enactment of the organism's self-generation. In the chain of evolution, we thus see a constant differentiation of asexual to sexual reproduction.[146]

But the fruit of the self-necessitation falls outward in the sensitive dimension insofar as the generated organism, by virtue of material corporeality, is ordered to a radical otherness with respect to the progenitor, which is just as foreign to itself. To be sure, there is a nest, but there is no "family room" [*Raum der Familie*]. Nevertheless, the generated organism at the animal level remains more internal to its origin. Even so, the internalizing here is still one that begins in externality and remains bound to it; it is an internalizing that itself is never able to enact the return to the essence, for this would presuppose that such an entity is turned outward from itself beforehand into externality from the center of its essence. Therefore the return to itself touches this essence, as it were, always only in the juxtaposition of the parts, in an "abstract realm" and not in the root of being. This entity, in coming back to itself, encounters "itself" once again only in its being externalized in the material medium of its existence. This is precisely what reveals itself in the manner in which the movement into subsistence is decided, out of which this entity has come about in the event of self-appropriation [*er-eignet ist*] in the introversion and extroversion: "Its emanation may have an external beginning, but has an internal termination; … no sensitive power reflects upon itself."[147] With the animal, in a way that corresponds to the specific mode of its subsistence, which is in turn measured in the particular reception of being by the vertical movement of finitization, the return to itself can come to completion only in a weak generalizing grasp of the world of appearances in the "image." The return to the root of being is not possible at this level.

It is only when we follow the reception of being beyond this speculatively sustained "realm of matter" and back into the spirit capax entis that the entity's return to its essence can be achieved. But this return to itself, if it is interpreted in light of the outline of being's exinanitio, means nothing other than that being's difference from the entity—that is, the difference of the crisis of superessential being from this circumscribed material potency-for-concrete-existence—becomes "thematic," and indeed it does so in the concrete subsistence of the particular organism characterized as "spirit in the world." In him, therefore, all the levels that we followed out in the dimension of matter are gathered together in a unity by the spirit that is opened into being. Man is capable of being's movement of finitization itself because his original task is the undergoing of the crisis of being. Therefore all the other *reditiones*, from the outermost externality of matter to the incipient internalizing of the sentient organism, must terminate in man's "return to himself" as their destination, insofar as the theme of being's movement into subsistence is revealed in man's return to himself.

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[146] Cf. *ST* 1.92.1.
[147] *SCG* 4.11.

However, man's return to himself, in which he actualizes the entire compass of being's movement of finitization—that is, "undergoes" being as love—must conversely intend all the other *reditiones*. Therefore Thomas says, "the ultimate end of the whole process of generation [!] is the human soul, and matter tends toward it *as toward an ultimate form*."[148] For, "since all motion is an issuing forth from potency to act, the ultimate act must be that toward which all motion tends; and since natural motion tends to what is naturally desired, the ultimate act must be that which all desire. This is '*to be*'."[149]

In man, the exinanitio of being becomes evident in its superessentiality as the lived and enacted theme of the concretely subsisting spirit capax entis: in the relationship between being and essence. Thus the reproductive and generative self-necessitating has to be illuminated in a still greater differentiation of the sexes, insofar as the natural "desire" of evolution points to man, who is open toward being as embodied spirit. What comes into play in the differentiation of the sexes, however, is the principles of the movement of finitization now manifest in their unfathomable depths: the act of being and the essence that receives it.[150]

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[148] *SCG* 3.22.

[149] *Comp. theol.* 1.11.

[150] "But man is yet further ordered to a still nobler vital action, and that is intellectual operation. Therefore there was greater reason for the distinction of these two forces in man; so that the female should be produced separately from the male; although they are carnally united for generation. Therefore directly after the formation of woman, it was said: 'And they shall be two in one flesh'" (*ST* 1.92.1). But let us recall that Thomas unveils the noble task of life on the basis of the enactment of the intellectus apprehensivus entis, which reveals itself to us as the act of being's movement of finitization. Because man has to undergo the crisis of being, thus *debuit esse maiori ratione distinctio* of precisely those principles that come into play in being's movement of finitization, namely, being and essence (act and potency). The *coniunguntur in*

Because the thematic of being's self-communication through the essence is given to man in an original sense, he thus bears witness to the fundamental event of the movement of finitization. This became evident to us as the "transnihilation" of being "through" the posited essence, from which transnihilation the essence proceeds from being as the act of the reception, limitation, and constraint of being by the essence, as being's self-affirmation in the positive positing of the finite. Because man subsists as embodied spirit, he makes this metaphysical play of the principles manifest "in his being there" ["*daseiend*"]. If he therefore affirms himself in his humanity, if he generates and reproduces himself as embodied spirit, then precisely this event of being's movement of finitization becomes determinative in relation to man's reproduction and self-actualization. Man's generation can occur therefore only in the sense of the revelation of being's movement of finitization, and indeed as the interpretation of the "connection" ["relation"] between the principles, being and essence.

Thus the man, who reveals the act of being (in "giving" himself), empties himself "in" the woman. But he does not do so in a way that implies a powerless "potential for being," which has to be fulfilled by the essence's determination; nor is this a sort of hypostasis of being, which has preempted its transnihilation and taken hold of its own pseudo-glory as something to be grasped. Both amount to the same thing in the end, and the man in this case would ultimately have only himself in mind.

The woman, by contrast, reveals the receptive, limiting "essence" of being in its transnihilation, which is "posited and given" to being as the metaphysical place of the obedience to being, but therein unveils itself as originally proceeding from it. In the blending of the principles that have become "explicit" in the dimension of matter, the entire abyss of being's movement of finitization opens up, and man bears "witness" in this abyss to the basic event by which all things exist as a result of God's love that lets be.[151]

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unum ad generationis opus therefore must unfold the "entire" logical structure of the movement of finitization. Something decisive with respect to the question of monogenism can also be said from the perspective of this metaphysical dimension. But we are unable to enter into this issue in the present context.

[151] Even so, it is never the case that man first becomes "wholly man" by becoming "one flesh," in the sense that both male and female would be necessary in order to have "man." The speculative dimension of what we have said reveals something quite different! Because man subsists as embodied spirit, because *intellectus forma huius hominis*, man can therefore make manifest the play of the principles in being's movement of finitization as the metaphysical constitution of the entity. Because the male and female are concretely subsisting human beings, they are therefore able to enact the movement of finitization first of all in the mode of a woman or a man. Because the act of the movement of finitization is for both fundamentally

Just as the essence proceeds from being for the sake of being's concrete self-communication, and nevertheless is posited in its unity per seipsam, so too does the woman proceed from man, but she is also "given" to him by God, so that both of them come to themselves through the undergoing of being's exinanitio! Therefore the man proceeds from the marriage with the woman insofar as he undergoes being as self-giving love as one from whom the child, the begotten human being, is called a "being." He proceeds in his power to beget and reproduce, which has its seal in fatherhood. But the woman, the receptive one who in her reception reveals the "bearing" essence of being, proceeds as the fruit-bearing mother, insofar as being comes to itself through the essence and the fruit of the movement of finitization gives proof of itself in the existence of the finite being: in the child.

But just as being's movement of finitization is illuminated in its most profound depths as gratitude, so too is the child nothing other than the incarnate *gratitude* of this enactment of being's movement of finitization, the focal point of which is man.

The first actualization nevertheless necessarily has to reproduce itself in the productive actualization of the child, who in the "uterus spiritualis of the family,"[152] after he has left the mother's womb, through the love that lets be and the address of the awoken word, is allowed to enter into the *omnia* of his existence, and indeed in turn in the presentation of the internal rhythm of being's movement of finitization, out of which the parents enable the child, as it were, to come into his own in complete self-standing. Education, from this perspective, is therefore nothing other than the concrete extension of begetting, insofar as man makes evident therein the fact that being is not brought to itself in a single step, and that it ought not to allow itself to come to a rest in pseudo-subsistence. Man's first actualization is therefore immediately continued in the progressive generation of education.[153] We must at this point

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nobilius opus vitae (= intelligere), in correspondence to their mode of being as man or woman, therefore man unveils the primal enactment of the movement of creation "in his being there" ["*daseiend*"]. And it is only from this perspective that the intensive unity of these two paradigms of existence are possible.

However, this does not imply an absolutizing of being and essence in the sense of being male and being female. Precisely this absolutization, which came to pass in modern thought, leads us to bring both self-withholding being and self-enclosed essence into the unity of the "whole man" in a "metaphysics of the sexes" in order thereby to affirm man in his "wholeness."

[152] *ST* 2–2.10.12.

[153] This generative education will be carried out in the manner in which the father and mother, for their part, undergo the theme of being's movement of finitization. It can be seen, now concretely, how all the temptations up to this point assert themselves in the act of education. We would have to show how the solus-vir rejects his transnihilation through to fatherhood and thus requires the sola-mulier, who, closed

incorporate what we said previously about the various temptations, so that we might achieve more insight into the precise dimension in which what one generally characterizes as the "history of man" has its ground. One can guess *where* in fact the decisions are made!

But let us present what we saw above in terms of supernatural revelation, in order to fathom at least to some extent the depths of what has been experienced and to elucidate the abyssal perversions that can sneak into metaphysics precisely through theologoumena! The Logos's incarnation reveals the transnihilation that pierces pseudo-subsisting being and the redemption of man from imprisonment in the ontological hypostasis of the anti-God.

This event becomes evident as God's covenant with man. In the center of the old and new covenant stands man's *commercium* with God, which is experienced as *marriage*—as the marriage of the chosen people with God, a people that continuously strays into the desert, into harlotry with idols, with the pseudo-hypostasis of perverted thinking—that is, into ingratitude—and to whom God professes fidelity: being does not consist in this case of love. Conversely, the covenant is the *commercium* of the People of God, the Church: she is the Bride of Christ, whom he leads home to the eternal wedding feast at the Father's table, and of whom Léon Bloy says, "The Church will treat the Holy Spirit as the Synagogue treated Jesus."

The Ecclesia proceeds from the Son's obedience to the Father, in his kenosis in the Holy Spirit, who, prior to all kenosis, is the nuptial [*hochzeitlich* = "super-temporal" or the "culminating moment of time"], personal "Medium" of the marriage of the infinite with the finite, without either one being dissolved in the other. We already saw earlier that the "place" of the

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up in herself, negates the "reception of being"; and how the self-withholding father enfeebles the receptive heart-principles of the mother and weakens her independence, thus binding the generated fruit immediately to himself and thus in a certain sense giving witness to his transgression, by which he imagines himself to be self-sufficient "like a god"; and how the sheltering womb is thus taken from the child, who is immediately "exposed," from the first moment of his existence, already in the mother's womb; and how the mother has not received the child, but encloses him in herself as something to be grasped and attempts to absorb the child into herself against the self-withholding father, in order thereby to assure herself of the Yes that the "act of being" did not address to her, as confirmation in her own body; and how the child thus does not gratefully possess himself as from another, but is "thrown" into a rootless existence; and how his existence has to allocate itself to itself from the a priori constellation of the ontological principles, and, clinging to itself, is therefore not able to give itself in turn. Here, we would have to ask once more in a wholly concrete way what "original sin" actually means, particularly in the context of a metaphysical interpretation of the finitization of being that has not been undergone in education. But we are not able to treat any of this in any more detail. We will attempt to do so later in a "metaphysics of education." [Ulrich published this essay as *Der Mensch als Anfang: Zur philosophischen Anthropologie der Kindheit* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1970). –Trans.]

finite in the infinite can be speculatively illuminated only on the basis of the abyss of the bonitas divina.

If we may be permitted to formulate it thus: The Holy Spirit is the necessary sense of being in Person. "Through" him, the Ecclesia—as the "essence," the bride of the man "Christ," the New Adam—proceeds from the transnihilation of the Logos on the wood of the cross, where he "stamps" sin as the ontological hypostasis of the anti-God and the negation of ontological gratitude unto its most profound depths; that is, he gathers it up and overcomes it. But the Church is the *essentiell* dimension, pervaded by the Holy Spirit and obedient to the Logos, the dimension in which the eternal Love generates for herself her New People, which the Son leads to the Father: That People is composed of the children of God, the brothers and sisters of Jesus, who have been born again in baptism and in the Spirit of Jesus, in a definitive [*end-gültigen*] movement of finitization from the virginal-maternal womb of the Ecclesia, obedient to the Father through the Holy Spirit. They are the ones who have been born again from water and the Holy Spirit, not born again from a "doctrine," the propositions of which are constituted in the vacillation of the revealedness of being as being in the sense of the verum that has been identified with the bonum; instead, the logic of Jesus's teaching is the logic of kenotic being, that is, of love. In the Holy Spirit, obedient to the Father's will, crucified wisdom shatters this "mastery" of doctrine in the obedience of the cross. In this act, however, both the hypostasis of being (the old Adam) and the self-emancipated essence (the old Eve), are definitively destroyed [*getilgt*]. The Church, in the celebration of the memorial of the self-gift of the Logos, makes her origin manifest and thus unveils in a profoundly mysterious way the superessentiality of the "to be."

Esse no longer lies impotent next to the essentia; God reveals himself as love; the Father does not first become himself by canceling out the otherness that limits the Son: the Ecclesia, who proceeds from the Son's obedience to the Father's will, is not the "other" to God, which God has to cause in order to be himself. She is not only Mother as Church; she is just as profoundly the Bride of Jesus in the Holy Spirit, who is also the Spirit of the Father. Nevertheless, as Ecclesia, she is beset by the constant temptation to enfeeble the Logos and imprison him in her "essentiell womb," to deny obedience to the Holy Spirit, to posit herself as "other" next to the Logos, on whom he would then be "dependent" ["*angewiesen*"]. She would in this case negate herself as "obedient space" for the exinanitio of being through the incarnation of the Word of God, which the Father has always already spoken into her open heart. It is instead precisely *in* her motherhood that the Ecclesia shows that "God alone suffices." She is virgin and mother at once. She unveils in her virginity the Fatherhood of the eternal God, who does not need the primal division of being [*Ur-teilung des Seins*] in the ontological difference for the generation of his Son, who has been begotten from eternity, the God who does not set himself apart as negation of negation and only thus exist as "Spirit." Because the Ecclesia can never set herself over against the incarnation of God in an essentiell way, she bears witness to the fact that God is love, that this love is what it is from all eternity, and not merely as a result of the negation of the negation. At the same time, however, it is just this witness that—specifically as a theological a priori that results from the logicizing of the Spirit—makes possible the conception of the "negation of the negation," which usurps the throne as "absolute concept" or "absolute science." The perverted witness culminates in this "absolute science," which diabolically escalates to ever higher degrees as the spirit's self-genesis and revelation gets transformed into "absolute knowledge," which the Church as Church gives to us; for this knowledge pretends to demonstrate that, because God is Love (!), he has always already communicated being into subsistence and in this way has shattered the abstract fixing of the anti-God. In this sense (!), the Church becomes the "history of the negation of negation" (pseudo-subsistence of being); she reveals that God does not need the ontological difference of being from that which subsists in order to be a living God and to mediate himself. In the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, the Father calls the Son by name: Hodie genui Te. But it is precisely in this Spirit that the dimension of the Spirit's movement of finitization is sublated in the mystery of God's triune life. Man's history unfolds in these depths. All the great trials and temptations of thought have their roots in it … and unsuspected perspectives open up for theology. The demonic frenzy of "pure science" is indeed nothing but the Ecclesia that has been perverted into the "absolute concept." Let us have the honesty to ask ourselves: What does it mean, from *this* perspective, to "take our bearings from the present age"?

c. The World in Its Origin

In his self-determination as the focal point of being's movement of finitization, man at the same time brings every other "subsistere" to decision as a result of the same process of being's self-affirmation—that is, self-finitization—and indeed he does so in all the dimensions that we sought to illuminate in the ever more profound reception of being.

Man "opens himself up" ["*erschließt*"] in his own subsistence in the return to his essence, insofar as he makes a decision in this return concerning his other, or that which he is not.

This decision covers all the enabling dimensions of the movement of finitization, whose focal point man is. What comes to the decision of subsistence in all these dimensions, insofar as man determines himself as the focal point of the event of being's subsistence—and there is only a single movement of finitization, because creation is "emanatio *totius* esse"—is precisely what we call the "*world of man*."

Here, we must immediately avert a misunderstanding. One could interpret what has just been said in the sense that man posits the world, placing it in being, and think that, in saying this, we are dissolving everything in an absolute subjectivism. But this is not so.

As we have seen, man, in his "freedom open all the way to the ground," can "will" the self-finitizing of being. But he is able to do so only because reason, in its "essential obedience," has always already opened up the crisis of being. The nonsubsistence of being, however, makes manifest, through the "obedience of the essence," that man, prior to his entering into the operation of the will and of love, has always already been loved beforehand, and that he can never recapture this "beforehand." Instead, by accepting this being-loved-beforehand in the manner that is proper to him, he "wills" the self-finitizing of being, that is, creation. The will wills being's movement of finitization because it aims at the good. Thus it orders being into positive subsistence, whereby this "order" converges with the "bidding" of the necessary sense of being, which orders being out of the crisis and into finitude. In this way, the love of God coincides inseparably with the love of man. It is therefore not possible to say that man "creates" the world. But he has the ability, as a result of his "freedom open all the way to the ground," to order being in every instance into finitization, because he is called to the love that aims at the good, in which moment being, resolved to itself, subsists (which does not mean that it is not resolved to itself in ideality or reality). The love that aims at the good gives freedom the power "to let the world of man be" at every moment in history, and thus not only to conceive the world in a fixed essential order, but to grasp it just as originally as man's "event."

Any misunderstanding of these statements can invariably be traced back to a forgetting of being's superessentiality. We thus see no other way to prevent these mistakes than to repeat, over and over, that a subjectivistic interpretation, or an interpretation along the lines of objective idealism, of the "event of the world" is possible only if being has been substantialized in ideality and turned into the source of the arbitrary production of the things that are and of truth in general.

But our entire effort has been devoted to the unmasking of this absurdity, in order to show that man can interpret himself as the governing paradigm of the cosmos only if he takes seriously the interchangeability of being and "nothing," which means: only if he affirms being as love and pulls off his mask of self-divinization. Precisely this truth requires us to say that the "freedom open all the way to the ground," which comes to perfection in the love that sustains the entire movement of being's finitization, coincides indistinguishably in its act with the necessary sense of being and the metaphysical Yes to being's superessentiality, also and precisely in relation to man's essence. Therefore man's act of self-determination, insofar as man determines himself as the paradigm of the cosmos, must also be the determination of the "other" that man is not. This "not," this negation—as man's "other"—thus reveals itself as the affirmative positing [*Position*] of the *world*.

Man can therefore enact the crisis of being only because it has always already been decided for him out of the power of the necessary sense of being in the light of love. Man's positing of the world thus unveils itself as the human spirit's allowing itself to be taken up [*Verfügtsein*] into the world. The openness to being as being is sealed in the spirit's dependence on the always already materially enduring reality in all the dimensions of existence. The being inserted into the world, however, ought not to be understood abstractly and univocally, in the sense of an essential stasis of being in the world. This insertion comes to decision at every moment in man's self-enactment, insofar as he does not leave behind the ontological difference that has been entrusted to him, and is never able to sacrifice being's superessentiality to the positive reality, since he would in that moment dissolve it.

We can formulate the "paradox" thus: man, who is capax entis, "posits" his world because he cannot posit it on the basis of (substantialized) being.

The always-already-having-been-decided-ness [*Vorwegentschiedensein*] of the movement of finitization and its "reenactment" ["*Nachvollzug*"] are, however, one and the same. Both happen "through" man. The sameness stands and falls, however, with man's obedience to the necessary sense of being. Here, there is no longer any essentiell certainty; here, thinking stands in the super-essentiality of the "to be." It is therefore possible to deny this statement for the sake of conceptual certainty, and retreat onto the ground of the essentiell-positive reality. From this perspective, of course, our endeavor seems like complete nonsense.

Insofar as he determines and resolves himself as the governing paradigm of the cosmos, man therefore brings everything "other," which he is not, to decision as "world." In this sense, he "posits" the world. The movement of finitization is *one*, however, because things do not participate in pieces of being, but rather in accordance with the procession of its emanation from God. Therefore what man brings to decision as not-I is a single "whole." This is man's world. Nevertheless, man can never reduce being to the potency of the will in his "freedom open all the way to the ground"! If he did, it would mean that reason had neutralized the crisis of being and substantialized the hypostasis of being as "object" of the will. But the "event of the world" through man would in fact be eliminated in this case, because reason would turn the historical being-in-the-world into a "thing of the past" by hypostasizing it.

It therefore becomes evident that "man's world" "occurs" at every moment, and indeed precisely in step with the rhythm of being's movement into subsistence. This also makes evident how this world, which comes to be in every moment, always already stands under judgment; it does so because the power in which man lets the world be on the basis of the world given to the "freedom open all the way to the ground" is the same as the power of the necessary sense of being that pervades being's self-finitization.

But the "way" that man undergoes the movement of finitization is left up to his "freedom open all the way to the ground." Nevertheless, just as the determination of the finite spirit is not something he mediates to himself alone but is rather something that happens to him, even though he has the capacity to determine himself, so too is the determination of *his* world something that happens to him.

The will, which extends itself out to the good as a whole, can never will being's movement of finitization as absolute will, because reason opens up for it the ratio finis. At the same time, however, *esse habet rationem finis*, and the intellect "preconceives the ratio of the end and proposes it to the will." Thus man discloses himself in his projection of the world always already as one who has been taken in by what is. Nevertheless, he is unable to remain standing in this factical possession by the world. Even though, in the positing of the world, he determines himself as one who has always already been taken in by what is, his reason, which is apprehensivus entis, at every moment discloses, through the will, the given in its ongoing reception of itself and brings the given therefore "through" man in turn into presence before him [*ins Vorliegen*]; for as long as reason holds being back in the crisis or even in the tiniest respect closes itself off to being's transnihilation, the world is absolutized and established in its "uncaused" character by the persisting reality. In this sense, one can genuinely say that the will, as love, constantly opens the world back up to its being caused, indeed, that love carries everything that exists back to its origin, which the given entity lying before it apparently casts aside insofar as it presents itself to the speculative gaze as something that is its always already "finished" ontologically speaking.

In this sense, the will as love opens to reason the dynamic of the transcendence into the being of beings. Nevertheless, the will would never have been able to break open the positive world in this way if reason had not always already as it were "received" the crisis of being beforehand. The will would have laid claim to the world for itself in the will to power if it were not obedient "freedom open all the way to the ground."

Disobedience, however, is expressed either, on the one hand, in reason's "emancipation" of the will into an essentiell, systematized, and unhistorical world on the basis of the hypostasis of being, a world in which freedom has nothing more to venture, or on the other hand in rationalized thinking's exposure of the will to the futility of constantly running up against the particular reality at every turn.

In its Yes to being's movement of finitization, the will can never impress the character of being caused on the world through its own power. But because the intellect is open into the "clearing of being," the will does not have to operate as a counter-thrust against the oppressive reality of the world; instead, in love, the will discloses beings in their depths so that man may perceive them and contemplate them as ever new. The will can never comprehend being in such a way that it thereby eliminates its uncaused character *as* being.[154]

Thus the connection between the intellect and the will comes to light in the unconcealment of the being of beings, just as it does in the pursuit of the movement of finitization: as "projection of the world," wherein what becomes manifest is precisely the a priori perfection of the spirit in being. Man's being taken in [*Eingenommensein*] by the world is always already transcended in such a way that, on the basis of this a priori, not only does the world come to be as event, but also, in this same event, man experiences his being ordered into his hour in history.[155]

There would be a good deal more here to think and sort through. But with these remarks, still another decision has been made: Man has revealed himself as having a capacity to "bestow unity" ["*Einheitsstiftung*"] on God, man, and world, and indeed to do so in a particular sense.

D. The Themes of *Metaphysica Specialis*

Insofar as man, on the basis of his "freedom open all the way to the ground," determined himself as the governing paradigm of the cosmos, we were able to specify what we have characterized as "man's world" in a speculative way in light of just this self-determination. Despite any possible misunderstanding, we have good reason to call man's world simply the world itself. The world became manifest as a "whole" and was speculatively illuminated in its unity insofar as it is posited on the basis of the enactment of the *one* movement of finitization in the fundamental act of man's self-actualization.

Man brought being to decision in this self-determination, insofar as he determined himself at the same time as dependent upon his other. In his enactment of the crisis of being into the movement into subsistence, he bestows his own concrete "unity" in the obedience of the "freedom open all the way to the ground."

But because, in obedience to the necessary sense of being, man has also co-affirmed the fact that he cannot bring being to mediation exclusively in his own subsistence, since this would amount to a hypostasizing of being, his decision regarding his own subsistence includes a decision concerning the "unity of the world."

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[154] Cf. Part A, chap. VI.2, this volume.

[155] Cf. J. Maréchal: "The affirmation of being, which, with respect to its primary matter, is already initiated in us by an invasion of the concrete reality, occurs and comes to completion (in the implicit datum of experience) by the absolute positing of the transcendent reality: all of our formal knowledge becomes 'non-objective' and unstable if it does not attach itself to one of these two extremes, whether it be the passivity at the beginning or the positing at the end." *Le point* V, 251–52.

In this positing of his metaphysical unity on the basis of the enactment of being's movement of finitization, man unveils himself as a person in the world: *first*, in his personal totality—since nothing is external to being apart from nonbeing—and thus as *totum potestativum* and "in a way, all things, for he may comprehend the *entirety* of being through his intellect";[156] *second*, in his personal *unrepeatability*, because being as being does not occur twice; *third*, in his *immediacy*, or *non-mediability*, because being does not cling to itself and fall apart and founder in the res but is participated in wholly and not in parts; *fourth*, in his *unsubstitutability*, on the basis of being's positive self-sameness with itself; *fifth*, in his *uniqueness*, because being always subsists in concreto and this concrete subsistence cannot be deduced from the hypostasis of being; and *sixth*, in his *historicity*, since "*idem esse* est formae *et materiae*" and the kenosis of the embodied spirit in the senses bears witness to the nonsubsistence of being as being in the ideal vacillation (absolute "having-been").

This co-positing of man's unity and that of the world is nevertheless anything but a presumption of human reason or an arbitrary act of will. Even though these positings are "ideated" by human reason, they nevertheless have their origin in being's movement into subsistence itself.

Now, we must recall that being was determined as "pure mediation," since it is "nothing" between God and the creature. We therefore said earlier that the entire dimension of being's self-finitization has to be negated by God himself, but precisely as this negation must be sublated positively in himself.

But if the co-positing of man's unity and that of the world comes to decision on the basis of being in the crisis (as its "beginning"), then finite reason co-posits man's unity and that of the world just as necessarily as it does the unity of God,[157] and indeed it does so on the basis of ontological participation, which occurs according to the emanation of being's procession from God (and not its subsisting next to God).

Now, one might say that this represents the summit of speculative hubris. Are we really claiming that man is supposed to posit even God's unity? The concern would be justified if finite reason had its beginning in the hypostasis of being. But it is precisely its humbling and its obedience to being's exinanitio that allows reason to avoid taking the vacillation of being "next to" God as its point of departure. Instead, the radical enactment of being's transnihilation has always already taken reason not only into its own concrete subsistence, but also at the same time into the world and God.

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[156] Cf. *SCG* 3.112.

[157] "Thus, without being ourselves the principle of things, and without entering into the creative act in a strict sense, nor directly disclosing its secret, we discern in being, in which all things participate, the first principle of all things." A. Marc, *Dialectique*, 707.

We admit that this task of bestowing unity leads man only too easily into the temptation to make himself the center around which all things turn, in an act of supreme hubris. But the positing of God's unity is never an act that would affect or limit the nature of God in any way at all; the positing of man's unity is never his absolute self-mediation out of being as such; and the positing of the world's unity is never a determinative mastery or a production of that unity out of man's own resources. What has occurred in the deduction presented above is nothing other than an illumination of the internal connection between the *metaphysica generalis seu ontologia* and the *metaphysica specialis*, which contains themes that we will unfold further, namely, the task of bestowing unity on man, world, and God. The interpretation was anticipated on the foundation of the ontology that became manifest in the phases of being's movement of finitization.

Thus we have answered the concern of Hegel, who seeks in a synthesis of the metaphysica generalis and specialis to unfold the themes of the latter—namely, "God, man, world" (cf. *Logik* I, 65)—out of the "objective logic," which determines being "through" the essence to the "concept" (cf. *Logik* I, 65). What is at issue in Hegel is precisely the movement into subsistence of "logicized being." In this movement, man mediates "empty being" to itself, elevates himself to self-consciousness, and speculatively "posits" the "unity" of God and the world in and through his own unity.

If the positing of these unities occurs from out of substantialized being, however, then they are either truly "positings" or merely "ideal vanishing points" of a reason that has forgotten being and collapsed into ratio.[158]

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[158] We believe that a fruitful engagement with Kant and the whole of German Idealism could take this as its point of departure.

E. The Anthropological Reduction of Being

The ever more perfect return to one's own essence expresses itself in an ever more profound movement into subsistence, insofar as what is meant here is the ever deeper reception of being in the vertical ontological difference, that is, the hierarchy of ever "higher natures." But with respect to spiritual substances, we can say: "they return to their essence with a complete return: knowing something external to themselves, in a certain sense they go outside of themselves; but by knowing that they know, they are already beginning to return to themselves."[159]

But if the *reditio ad essentiam* is nothing other than the proper interpretation of the *subsistere rei*,[160] which is intelligible in turn only on the basis of the speculative enactment of ontological participation, then the spirit's return to itself from the outermost externality of matter and the decision of the crisis of being coincide in a single movement. We can infer from this the following: If reason comes to a standstill in the outermost externality of matter, then it falls prey to the senses and identifies itself with self-withholding being as such. But if it enacts the crisis of being, then it arrives in its innermost interiority from its outermost externality. But what man lays bare in this span, what he measures in a "determinative" way, is what he himself is. The exitus and reditus are therefore nothing other than the undergoing of being as love or the ontological difference in human existence. "Thus, the activity of our understanding is directed, first, to the things which are grasped through phantasms, then returns to know its act, and then goes further to the species, habits, powers, and *the essence of the mind itself*."[161]

If the intellect releases the senses from itself in obedience to being's superessentiality, then what is sealed in this is man's Yes to the being that does not cling to itself, so that, in the "littleness" of the material world, he bears witness in a profoundly mysterious way to being as likeness of the triune God, who is not closed up in himself as absolute essence, *but is absolutely open in personal love*. But let us recall that being's speculatively disclosed movement into subsistence is not the same thing as the concrete *subsistere rei in seipsa*. The movement into subsistence is the concrete subsistence of the res, which has been speculatively opened up into being. But if man is able to enact the movement into subsistence and if he is its proper theme, then he enacts in a "representative" way [*"stellvertretend"*] the return of all beings to themselves; indeed, he even enacts the return to the essence of God himself, though of course we immediately and emphatically have to add that this occurs only in the mode of the *propositio*, or in other words the being of this enacted movement of finitization is not identical with the being of God as substance.[162] Nevertheless, the return to the essence of beings and the return to the essence of God in himself are speculatively "the same," just as is the return of man to himself. These claims do not contain the least contradiction, *assuming that* one remains open in one's thinking to nonsubsisting being as being!

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[159] *De ver.* 1.9.

[160] Cf. *ST* 1.14.2.1.

[161] *De ver.* 10.9.

But this is what we mean when we speak of an "anthropological reduction of being," namely, the determination of being in man's self-determination. In this specific sense, man mediates all beings into their subsistence, insofar as he thereby interprets himself as the focal point of being's self-finitization.

It is nevertheless worth stressing once again that we are not here proclaiming the Übermensch in the sense of omnipotent reason. This is not at all an "anthropologizing" of ontology: "'To be' is more noble than all other things, because everything else follows upon being: and simply 'to be' is more noble than 'to understand,' if 'to understand' is able to be understood without being."[163] "It is not true that 'to understand' ... is nobler than 'to be,' but it is determined on the basis of being."[164] It is precisely the absolute [*schlechthinnige*] predominance of being with respect to finite thinking that enables us to affirm such things and to sublate ontology into anthropology, whereby ontology is led into its crisis, since being's superessentiality can be demonstrated and legitimated only in this anthropological reduction.

Let us take a step further! Anthropological reduction means the determination of being in man's self-determination. But this self-determination does not begin in being, which is then negated by the exinanitio. Instead, man enacts his self-determination in obedience—that is, as required by the power of the necessary sense of being—which orders being into finitude. But because the will as love has a capacity for the necessary sense of being and is provoked and moved immediately by it as "freedom open all the way to the ground," we may say that love orders being into finitude; what nevertheless concerns love most profoundly is the "poverty" of this finitude. Thus man, as one being among others, brings beings "to subsistence." It is right here that we discover man's great temptation: To give up being a "playmate" as one being among many in order falsely to presume to be the "shepherd of being." Nevertheless, the return to self is a willing of being that lets be in the onto-logical Yes to all that is. Man liberates every other "subsistere" in the return to his own essence, and thereby determines that subsistere in light of his own.

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[162] The essence of the thing or of the *actus essendi* can be designated by *ens* and *esse*. If one thus says that the being of God is manifest to us, then being is not understood in the aforementioned sense, for "as his essence is unknown so also is his existence. In the second sense we know that God is, because we conceive this proposition in our mind from his effects" (*De pot.* 7.2.1).

[163] 1 *Sent.* 17.1.2.3.

[164] *De ver.* 22.6.1.

As we have seen, the opening of the dimension of participation, the disclosure of the ground of the positive reality, is at the same time the enactment of the movement of causality—that is, the gift of being as creation—"because from the fact that a thing has being by participation, it follows that it is caused by another."[165] Therefore the anthropological reduction is inspired by an original, creative dynamic. It is the dynamic of love, in which man, insofar as he gathers together all of nature in relation to himself, sets it free into the infinite creative Yes that God addresses to nature through his gift of being. Anthropological reduction as the act of gathering all beings in man therefore means nothing other than the return of all being to its own ground and precisely not to man, since the resolution of the crisis of being by man does not imply that man restricts the meaning of being to himself. Man liberates all things to be what they are precisely when he unveils himself as the focal point of being's movement of finitization. This is his great temptation: to mediate the return to self to all things, but to do so in such a way that the will already identifies itself beforehand with the intellect in the vacillation and love degenerates into nothing but a concretizing function of consciousness. In this case, the poverty of the intellect and the will would be exchanged for the "riches" of the anti-God (cf. section 4.D.iv–vi above).

F. The Word as the Center of the Anthropological Reduction

Let us recall at this point that man is embodied spirit and as such has been received in matter. Being's self-mediation through man's essence thus implies that matter is a determination of essence; this self-mediation thus expresses itself as the outpouring of form over the matter (in giving-being) and in the form's return to itself (in having-being). Here, we see that the fundamental rhythm of man's self-enactment is determined on the basis of subsistence.

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[165] *ST* 1.44.1.1.

And if man determines the given being's return to itself in his own return to his essence, then it is man's task to illuminate and bring all beings to speech in their subsistence in each case in themselves in his exitus and reditus. This allowing-to-come-to-speech begins in the outermost externality of the appearance. Man begins in the outermost externality of his sensibility—that is, in the midst of the sensibly given—for the sake of the nonsubsistence of the "to be" and its exinanitio.

But we have seen, in all the return to the essence of man, that man must be intended from the lowest natural beings on up, since he is the focal point of being's kenosis. It follows that, because being results from the principles of the essence and as it were makes itself into a task "from below," man is also the focal point of evolution.

Thus man unearths the root of being from the extro-version of beings in their appearance; indeed, he unearths it from every given—this is how he actualizes the "anthropological reduction." But because this anthropological reduction at the same time implies the liberation of the entity into its own ground, man thus cognitively receives the thing known into himself in such a way that he allows it to manifest itself from out of its ground and so to show itself. The gathering of the thing known in the knower is the revealed return of the thing known to its own ground and thus its self-manifestation. But because the intellectus capax *entis* never allows the anthropological reduction to come to a stop in the dimension of the corporeal appearance, this operation is not limited simply to the internalization and gathering of the sensible appearance in an image. If it were, then man would not be able to uncover the ontological root; he would not be awakened by the light of being and would thus be able to see things only in a corporeal light, in which they disclose their surfaces but do not become explicit in their essential form. The light of being would be sacrificed to the factical, material light, and being, in its superessentiality, would founder in the res. We just saw a moment ago that the impossibility of a return from the outermost externality has its ground in the fact that finite reason clings to being's pseudo-subsistence. Whenever reason preempts being's exinanitio in ideality, it always loses itself in generalized images or "universal image-concepts" ["*allgemeinen Bildbegriffen*"]. There is a connection between "empty appearance" and "empty being"! The pull of being (in the movement of finitization), however, goes beyond the dimension of pure matter. It not only attains the degree of sentience, in which there already exists the gathered up and generalized internalization of the appearances, but it aims in evolution at man's reason capax entis. The anthropological reduction, as the concrete exhibition of the entire span of the ontological difference, therefore, not only produces the image (or displays the entity in its appearance), but it moreover takes the image up into the word, in which man bears witness to himself as *capax entis* and achieves speech. Man has therefore surveyed the entire abyss of the movement of finitization in the word; he has determined himself as its focal point, has allowed beings to be illuminated in their inner essence and from within themselves, and at the same time he has in every case "released" and freely granted their own subsistence to them. The calling of beings back to man is their coming to expression [*Zu-Worte-kommen*]. The apparent "subjectivism" in the reduction and man's recollective gathering of the entity thus proves to be the crisis of the objectivity of the given being simply.

Thus word and image approach one another in the anthropological reduction; they share a proximity to each other that warrants more reflection than it has received.

We can acquire an even more profound awareness of all of this if we approach it from another angle.

The things that appear to us actualize themselves in "their other." This is why they "appear." The appearance is different from their essence, even though their essence exhibits itself in the appearance. Thus the tree's essence makes its appearance through and in what is not that essence, for example, in "this" tiny leaf. If the vast abundance of leaves, the root, the branches, the specific differentiation of cell structure did not exist, then the essence of the tree itself could never become actual. But it *is* in *actuality* only in the multiplicity of appearance, which is in a certain sense undetermined with respect to its unity. The essence of the tree actualizes itself in "its other" and becomes manifest therein. The superessential "to be," however, mediates the essence into the appearance; indeed, the appearance comes to light as a result of being's mediation in a certain sense as the "'to be' of the essence," insofar as what unveils itself therein is precisely the fact that the substance is not appearance—for it affirms itself in and through its accidents and is co-affirmed in them. This is something we discussed earlier.

In the present context, it is important to recall that, while a certain "necessity" of the subsisting finite substance results in the appearance, nevertheless, the progressive differentiation in self-actualization, which we see for example in the tree, does not aim at the undetermined multiplicity of its appearance but rather at the *indivisum*, without there being a single path from the parts into the unifying ground. The reason the entity is undetermined in its multiplicity with respect to its unity is that the parts do not at all dissolve the indivisum. The negation of the negation (the indeterminacy of the appearance) is the positive affirmation of the substantial ground in its actuality. The entity's affirmation of itself as actual is the sublation of the negation in the moment of the finite entity's resolve to be itself (bonicity).

Here we see once again how the bonum, as the moment of the "ontological present," makes manifest the procession of the appearance and being in concrete subsistence through the essence in (!) the appearance. Therefore: the negation of the negation of the appearance and its sublation in the entity have their seal in the moment of bonicity. The finite entity is wholly itself in the multiplicity, whereby the multiplicity is mediated and sublated, and it is only in this way that the essence is "there."

In the subsistent being's breaking open of the essence, which occurs in the appearance, the essence enters into operation in the indeterminacy of "its other" in such a way that being affirms itself precisely therein. The exitus and reditus are thus unveiled as the ontological "*play*" of being in its subsistence!

This negation of negation as sublation of the appearance, wherein the essence reveals itself as ground, is therefore nothing other than the decision of the convertibility of being and "nothing" in the "vertical" movement into subsistence by reason: negation of the nonsubsistence of the simple and complete being for the positive affirmation of itself in the concrete substance through, in, and with the appearing essence.[166]

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[166] Man therefore has to undergo the "sameness" ["*Selbigkeit*"] of thinking and being not only in the crisis of being itself; instead, this "sameness" is likewise decided in the outermost externality of sensible awareness, that is, in the anthropological reduction of the appearance of that which man is not to the ontological root that is proper to the entity. This occurs through man's self-enactment as embodied spirit. The undergoing of the crisis of being (either in correspondence with the obedience of reason to the necessary sense of being or in accordance with the hubris of the identity of thinking and being that sets itself against being as love [exinanitio]) is the a priori projection that converges into one with the crisis of the unity of phenomenon and consciousness. Both man's self-exhibition in the ontological reditio ad essentiam and the self-showing of the entity in itself that occurs through this reditio have their roots in this. The way that this enactment unfolds when it begins with the logicizing of being has come to expression often in our essay. Cf., moreover, Blondel, *L'Action*, 42 [*Action*, 53]: "For in the order of phenomena and the sciences which are limited to it, the ontological distinction between being and knowing makes no sense: the phenomenon is at once something known and something knowing. We can and we must show how the subject results from the object and how the subject returns to act and live in the object, without pre-

The rejection of the negation of the appearance and the sublation of the same is the exitus and reditus of the concrete substance, the exegesis of its subsistence.

If man therefore enters into the innermost interiority from the outermost externality in the return to his own essence through the intellect capax *entis* (!), then along *the same* path he also attains to the essence of things, insofar as he negates the appearance and takes it back, sublating it, into the ground of the entity. If, conversely, he comes from the outermost externality of the appearance to its essential ground, he encounters himself in this movement precisely when he determines the other as other. The return to the entity's essence is man's return to his own human essence. Man sets all things free in relation to himself and turns them toward himself; in so doing, he sets all things free into the ground that is proper to each entity.

By virtue of the ever more profoundly enacted return to himself, man enters ever more deeply into the essence of things, so that his self-actualization reaches its peak in a clearing-gathering and loving letting be of what is. This movement, however, is sustained and "guided" by the "vertical" ontological difference, which man enacts in his exitus and reditus. In the indeterminacy of the appearance (considered in itself), however, nothing definitive has yet been decided concerning the essence of beings, for beings are necessarily undetermined in the multiplicity of their appearances with respect to their essence. Man's return to himself nevertheless makes a decision concerning the essence, without annulling the indeterminacy of the appearance, precisely for the sake of the existing (!) essence, insofar as knowledge aims, on the one hand, at being, while on the other hand the essence is always already mediated into its appearance through precisely this being. Man's return to himself is unveiled as the path from the diffusion and multiplicity of the appearance to unity, because it is a path to *being*, for "everything guards its unity as it guards its 'to be.'"[167]

But because the appearance is not simply an extension of the essence, on account of the superessentiality of the "to be," which concretely [*daseiend*] breaks open the essence into the appearance, there is therefore an essential difference between, on the one hand, the image that has been gathered to-

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judging thereby any ontological question." The ontological "pre-judice" is to be sure thematically implied in our discussion (cf. Part A of this volume).

[167] *ST* I.II.I.

gether and fashioned [*eingebildet*] from the appearance of the appearing essence and, on the other hand, the word that man produces in the light of being in a *conceptio rei intellectae.*

In this conception, man has surveyed the entire dimension of the movement of finitization and safeguards it in the word. But because he comes to speech in this operatio on the basis of himself just as radically as things come to speech on the basis of themselves, according to the *one* movement of finitization, the world is thereby received, taken up into, and "worded" by man in his knowing, insofar as the world thereby reveals itself from itself and is illuminated in its self-showing and apprehended.

There is therefore no "path" from image to word, because the image, even as a universalized image, remains within the dimension of the living nature that comes to itself; but there is nevertheless a unity between word and image, which results from the unity of "spirit in the world" or "essence and appearance" that is mediated by the superessential "to be."

Despite this difference between word and image, we must remind ourselves that, while the appearance is negated in its multiplicity by the indivisum, as negation it is sublated and preserved in it.[168]

Because the bonum extends even to *non ens*, this negation (as well as the sublation of the multiplicity of beings) can be understood only from the innermost heart of being or, in other words, on the basis of goodness alone. Thus, in the enactment of the anthropological reduction, we cannot separate the image from the word in order to safeguard the word, or else man's return to himself would have to occur in opposition to (!) the mediating dimension of superessential being, which means: spirit and sensibility would be dissociated from each other. Even though the image is negated in the finite spirit's self-determination, it is nevertheless sublated in the enactment of the reductio ad essentiam, which goes to the very roots and is sheltered in the word. The unity of word and image can be determined only on the basis of being's superessentiality (on the basis of the radical difference between them). Just as the essence is never there beyond the appearance except as abstract concept, so too the birth of the interior word in man's return to himself does not suffice. The "interior word" thus gives itself an outward "form" [*"bildet" sich aus*]; it takes on the body of breath, it comes forth, and is sent on its way. It is only in this incarnation that man is "speakingly" present as a sign-maker

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[168] Thomas therefore says that the unum adds to ens the *ratio negationis* (cf. *De ver.* 1.1).

[*ein Zeigender*] (dic-ere = Zeig-en), in whose eloquent signs things exhibit themselves from themselves and become manifest. Being's wholly enacted movement of finitization thus manifests itself in personal dialogue, wherein being opens itself up at the same time in its "ontological presence."

The word is thus nothing other than the sign indicating that man has enacted the return to his own essence, that he has turned back from outermost externality into innermost interiority and has decided about essence and nonessence in the enactment of the primal division/judgment of being. But this is at bottom the speculative enactment of the convertibility of being and "nothing" in being's movement of finitization toward subsistence.

"For whenever we understand, by the very fact of understanding there proceeds something within us, which is a conception of the object understood, a conception issuing from our intellectual power and proceeding from our knowledge of that object. This *conception* is signified by the spoken word; and it is called the *word of the heart*."[169] "Therefore it follows that, first and chiefly, the interior *concept of the mind* is called a word."[170]

Man therefore passes through and with the appearance to the entity's essence. But if this intellective gathering (logos) is supposed to bear witness to itself in man's return to himself, then in this gathering, reason has to enter into act from out of the luminous night of being (!). In the speculative "beginning," however, the intellect has in a certain sense not yet come to decision out of this luminous night, or, in other words, the return to itself as the event of being's subsistence has "not yet" been enacted. In relation to the sensibly given entity to be known, this means that man keeps himself entirely in the indeterminacy of the appearance, for (if the "beginning" is understood in the sense of a fixed and isolated determination of reflection) nothing has yet been decided regarding being and essence in the return. The return to itself, however, intends concrete subsistence. The vacillation of being, in which being does not subsist—or, more precisely, the crisis of being in unmediated "inseity," in which nothing has yet been decided regarding being's subsistence—thus corresponds to the appearance considered in isolation.[171]

If in its (presumptuous) thinking finite reason were to come to a standstill in the place of the crisis of being (in being's convertibility with the "nothing"), then it cannot avoid abandonment to sensibility; in this case, it remains banished in the flood of images and appearances that constantly decompose from within. In this exile, thinking is never able to read into (inte-llect) the essence of things, for pseudo-subsisting being no longer has need of any essence, since it does not carry out the negation of negation—that is, the sublation of its nonsubsistence—through the essence. It is precisely at the moment in which man arrogates to himself the indifferent vacillation of being as the place of the speculative unfolding, or in other words when he thinks he can determine the essentiell differences on the basis of being as being by means of subtle distinctions, since thinking and being are identified, and he dissipates himself restlessly in the outward show of appearance [*im Schein der Erscheinungen*], that all clarity is stripped from thinking. The "pure spirit" in pseudo-subsistence founders in the dimension of "animal sensibility." Thus thinking falls prey to ambiguity, since it fixes itself in indeterminacy. Every anthropological reduction, in the sense of man's self-determination "through" the entity's reduction to its ground, which does not take place out of being's transnihilation in obedience to the necessary sense of being, falls prey to the outward show of the ambiguous indeterminacy of being "as such," falls prey, that is, to the "Yes and No at once." But there is still a second parallel that comes to light here!

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[169] *ST* 1.27.1.

[170] *ST* 1.34.1.

[171] This is also the sense in which we ought to understand the sentence: "the senses deal with that which is outermost as the understanding deals with principles" (*De ver.* 12.3.2); the core of this original store [*Urschatzes*] of the principia nevertheless unveiled itself in the principle that states "that affirmation and negation cannot both be true at the same time" (1 *Sent.* 19.5.1; *De ver.* 15.1.4 and 5).

If man renounces the foregrasp out toward being, then he falls into the prison of a neutralized, factical reality. But if, in the foregrasp, he comes to a stop in the dimension of being as such, then he likewise falls prey to the outward show of appearance. The same consequence results from both! The renunciation of the foregrasp, interpreted as a temptation, means: "Do not transcend into the ontological difference, it is an absurdity, for it will only bring you into a 'non subsistens.' Instead, just remain with what is given, what has always already been there in front of you." If thinking gives into this temptation, then at that moment it withdraws itself from the positive essence (as the seal of the superessential being as being) into the appearance, since the positing of the essence is intelligible only from out of the crisis of being.

The temptation from the other direction says: "Thinking does not need to terminate in the appearance; it is able to transcend this into being! The finite spirit thus proves what it is by accomplishing what its essence empowers it to do!" But the intending of being in the crisis, which has now become explicit, against the kenosis through the appearance in the positive res already takes being for itself, and thinking falls prey to the indeterminacy of the hypostasis of being, whereby it founders once again in mere appearance.

Likewise, the person who considers himself a "pure realist" and takes "absolutely seriously" only what he sees given before him has ascended into the pseudo-subsistence of the ideality of being. In both cases, we have the refusal to undergo being's movement of finitization; neither man himself nor the entity come "to speech."

Coming to a stop in the vacillation of being banishes thinking to the realm of appearance. Thus to come out of the vacillation into subsistence in obedience to the necessary power of the sense of being means to carry out the *reditio ad essentiam* from the appearance. Both the speculative undergoing of the "vertical" ontological difference and the "horizontal" act of the introversion and extroversion are sealed in the word; for "sense and imagination know only external accidents, but the intellect alone penetrates to the interior and to the essence of a thing."[172] But what comes to light here is the following: "For when we understand ... that which the intellect conceives from the thing understood, is called the word."[173]

"For whenever we understand, by the very fact of understanding there proceeds something within us ... the word of the heart."[174] The pursuit of being's movement into subsistence is thus sealed in the word. But because the proper enactment of being's self-finitization unveiled itself in the thanksgiving of thought, the word is the thanksgiving of the thinking of being.

Man's intellective return to himself proves itself in the word: "our intellectual word ... is that at which our intellectual operation terminates."[175] What reveals itself in the word is thus being's transnihilation, the reception of being by the essence, the positing of the essence with being in the positive reality, and being's convergence out of the moments of reality and ideality into the moment of bonicity. The word is thus the custodial place of being's movement of finitization, the focal point of which is man. It is the space, the mirror, in which every undergoing of the ontological difference is reflected and illuminated. Thus the word originally aims at the Logos, through which the hypostasis of being was ruptured and man was handed over to himself, insofar as faith reveals to him the theme of being as love in the exinanitio of the Son as the basic form of his existence.

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[172] *De ver.* 1.12.

[173] *ST* 1.28.4.1.

[174] *ST* 1.27.1.

[175] *De ver.* 4.2.

But man's word does not subsist. The subsistent word is the one that says being as being and, thus, the one that has always already "closed" the ontological difference, without its having needed to be opened "beforehand," because it was not, is not, and never will be dependent on it. Man's word is nevertheless not the entity; to be sure, "it remains," but it nevertheless "does not subsist."[176] Even though the word is a place that preserves and safeguards, a place in which the whole of being's movement of finitization takes shape, it is nevertheless not born from an absolute reception of being, because being does not begin in pseudo-subsistent being as such. If man possessed the entity in himself as his word, it could only be on the basis of the hypostasis of being. What is thus expressed in the nonsubsistent word is the fact that man does not mediate the entity by himself out of being, even though he does indeed let it be "through himself." What this shows us is that the "freedom open all the way to the ground," which lovingly lets beings be, is ordered into obedience to the necessary sense of being. But through the hypostasis of being, man wants to make himself the incarnate Verbum Divinum, for "The divine Word is not merely an intention understood, as our word is, but it is also a *thing* existing and subsisting in nature."[177]

The true word is therefore the witness and proof of the impossibility of man's closing of the ontological difference of being from concrete subsistence, even though in the word both the entity and man come to speech in the same way. Both are unified in the word; for being's movement into subsistence, as the structure of the act of thinking, is "the same" as the "original" movement, by which all beings exist.

Insofar as man comes back to himself, speaks and expresses himself, he expresses at the same time all that is, and indeed he does so in such a way that what is comes to speech from itself.

But man does not safeguard the ontological difference in a single reception of the word. It is only the closing of the ontological difference in the absolute concept that would allow everything to be captured and preserved in a single word. This *conceptio* would not need to bring the self-exchange of being and "nothing" to decision through the obedient space of the essence. Everything would have always already "been" (!) decided in a single, infinite reception of being, in which the infinite difference of the divine self-communication and the ontological difference would have to coincide. Thinking, in this case, would have reached its end in a *simplex apprehensio* of being and thus annulled the judgment of existence.

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[176] *ST* 1.37.1.2.

[177] *SCG* 4.11.

But the conceptio verbi comes to be only out of the judgment of existence/primal division of being. Through this act, the conceptio verbi is constantly brought under judgment [*Gericht*]. The ontological difference must be undergone anew in every moment in man's self-actualization; it can never be perfectly brought behind thinking in the word or made into "a thing of the past." Thus the word constantly compels us into the opening of the ontological difference, out of which it wants to be newly heard and contemplated in silence [*erschwiegen*]. Although it is the known "essence-form" of the entity, the word is through and through historical and therefore always young; the word is the way, it is never the past, except insofar as it arises from the future of being. Obedience to being's transnihilation occurs in the thoughtful acceptance of the historically given, into which man is inserted, and this obedience pours reason out into the senses and brings it onto the path in the incalculability of history: "But, since the senses are the first source of our knowledge, we must in some way reduce to sense everything about which we judge."[178]

The identification of man with the "eternal Word" stems from the "envy" and the hubris of the hypostasis of being, which banishes man to the outward show of appearance. But because this outward show is undetermined, finite reason's absolute mastery of the rigid and univocally self-enclosed essences, which have been deduced from the power center of the hypostasis of being, compensates for the indeterminacy of the appearance. These essences no longer have any internal certainty, since the transnihilation, out of which they are posited, is eliminated. Thus even the univocal, essentiell "concepts," which correspond to the fixed res and by means of which reason strives to organize the perfectly endless appearances, fall victim to ambiguity.

If the word is no longer opened up into the superessentiality of the light of being, it turns into the representative of the fixed, unmediated essence, into the mere *idea clara et distincta*, which necessarily fragment in the appearance, since they are no longer conveyed out of the superessential being. This speculative a priori allows a complete de-essentializing and thus undifferentiating of the "pure essence." The "pure essences" turn into "generalized images," which retain the status of appearances.

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[178] *De ver*. 12.3.2.

But this universal, as abstract and rigid image-concept, carries in itself the stamp of the absolute, for thinking took its beginning beforehand in substantialized being. The word has thus turned into the "pure concept," which no longer safeguards being's movement of finitization and no longer attains to the heart of things. Here, there is no longer any cognitive reception, and nothing is received—the truth of things turns into a thing to be grasped in concepts [*be-griffen*]—wherever there is also no longer anything possessed in gratitude from another. All there is is what has been "achieved." *In whatever manner* man undergoes the ontological difference, it is *thus* that he comes to speech, he names beings, he shepherds them. It is only in the word that he has the world, that he is in the world and the world is with man and "through" him.

Man comes out of himself once again into the world "through" the word. The word is man's path: "from the knowledge which we possess, by actual thought we form an internal word; and thence break forth into love."[179] The great temptations that man has to withstand in his self-actualization, every undergoing and overcoming of the danger of the thinking of being, every falling victim and perversion, are sealed in the word, which stands in the grace and the judgment of that Word in which in a profoundly mysterious way the thinking and loving enactment of the ontological difference is brought home with a human face to the right hand of the Father.

But ontological spatiotemporality also comes in play in the word (cf. Part A, chap. VII, this volume). Every "future of being," out of which reason comes to expression, can be understood only on the basis of the essential past of being, and every having-been is itself only out of the ad-vent of being. We have already discussed this at length above. For now, we need to consider this in relation to the word!

If the word is the preserving and shepherding center of the ontological difference, then it has its original place in the moment of the ontological present, in the bonum: out of the ontological distances of the future and the past. What came to speech from these distances could only be said out of the future of being; it could be said only with a view to this future, with a view to that dimension of the word that is able to arrive still historically as coming toward; for that which arrives in the word brings reason to decision in obedient thinking as the thanksgiving of being's movement of finitization. This coming toward can come to speech only as that which it always already "has been." Thus man stands in the return to himself in an abyssal dialogue in the depths of ontological spatiotemporality.

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[179] *ST* 1.93.7.

The "fullness of time" is when the decision of being in its finitization is made by the eternal Word of the Father, who is Alpha and Omega. In this fullness, everything is gathered into the Now of God's absolute "presence," and liberated into history with this "presence" in *such* a way that, in emptying itself into the poverty of the Son of Man, it ruptures the vacillation of being, and appropriates man to himself so that he may come anew to speech in this word as the universal focal point of the giving of being. In terms of supernatural revelation, this means that man's sacramentally redeemed self-enactment can be unfolded fundamentally out of the unifying ground of the Logos that empties itself unto death on the cross: in the order of the sacraments, the innermost heart of which is therefore the Word, because from its essence it presents itself as the preserving place of being's properly enacted movement of finitization. Much could be said for a "theology of the word" on this basis, above all concerning the relationship between the Logos and human speech.

6. The Metaphysical Interpretation of Reason in Being's Movement of Finitization

A. Reason in the Manifestness [*Offenbarkeit*] of Truth

Let us recall once again the embodied spirit's openness in the truth of being. Thomas says, "Because there is in a thing its *quiddity* and its *esse*, *truth is founded more in the esse of a thing than in its quiddity*, just as the name of being is derived from *esse*; and in the operation itself of the intellect that accepts the being of the thing as it is through a certain assimilation to itself, the relation of adequatio is completed in which the nature of truth consists. Hence I say that *the thing's esse itself is the cause of truth*, according to which it exists in the intellect's cognition."[180] Everything we have reflected on along our path comes to expression in this passage in a concentrated form. The truth is grounded more originally in the being of beings than in the essence. The intellect has always already opened itself up to the being of beings, so that it never strays into the prison of the res. To be sure, the res takes its name from the essence (cf. *De ver.* 1.1), but *ipsum esse est quo substantia est.*[181] If reason is totally fettered to the res, subject and object radically fall apart from each other. This gives rise immediately to the condition of possibility for a perverted "critique of knowledge," alienated from being, which makes the knower's *contactus* with the known the principal object of reflection.

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[180] 1 *Sent.* 19.5.1.

In truth, however, the intellect is opened up in a priori perfection into the light of truth; the spirit's adequation to being is already enacted and the knowing subject, precisely in the return to *its own* essence, and is not isolated but is rather ordered into the agreement with all beings. In the return to his own essence, "which is by nature apt for the agreement of things,"[182] man makes this *conformitas* immediately manifest in the *word*. Man's openness into truth is the condition of possibility of reason's adequation to the entity. But just as man, who is embodied spirit, does not have to arrive at being in a subsequent moment, unless he were to get trapped in the "nothing" and sublate his concrete subsistence into the absolute indifference of the "not yet" decided being as being, so too he is originally always already in the truth; that is, he has always already been inserted into the agreement with beings. Thus reason comes to know as something that has always already known, and the senses into which the spirit has emptied itself (in obedience to the exinanitio of being itself) come to receive knowledge as having always already learned. It is only when we deduce this epistemological a priority from the hypostasized light of being that we misinterpret it. The light of being that belongs to the intellectus agens in this case shines immediately into the possible intellect; the extroversion onto the path of the senses gets reduced, just as the extroverted will gets retracted back into consciousness. Moreover, the body splits into so many separate parts; it loses the a priori perfection of sensibility, and this in turn corresponds to the dissolution of the superessentiality of being, which mediates between essence and appearance in things. Both set themselves apart from each other: the "thing-in-itself" gets dissociated from "appearance," and "intelligible existence" gets dissociated from the "phenomenal world."

Now, as we have seen, man stands in the openness of the ontological difference. Every res, however, is called true "according to the extent to which it possesses the form proper to its nature."[183] Thomas continues: If this is the case, "the intellect, in so far as it is knowing, must be true to the extent that it has the likeness of the thing known."[184] Reason can therefore "let occur" the entity's *habere propriam formam* as spirit that has been opened up in the ontological difference. The entity's *habere formam propriam suae naturae* is ascertained speculatively as the form's (and matter's) procession from being through being's transnihilation through to the res. Thus reason, as capax *entis*, can *let happen* the truth of the entity according to the nature of its specific form in the enactment of the movement into subsistence, insofar as it generates this specific form in the energy field of the ontological difference that has opened up to the spirit, and allows it to proceed. But because the embodied spirit never realizes this procession on the basis of the hypostasis of being, the procession of the *similitudo rei intellectae* must at the same time be specified by the res, on which the spirit is obediently dependent (as the "determinative" other). In this sense, the specification by the res and the generation of the known essential form [*Wesensgestalt*] by the intellect are one and the same act precisely on the basis of man's a priori openness in the manifestness of truth. The spirit with a capacity for the ontological difference reflects this concordance between reason and the entity and thus comes to know the truth.

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[181] *ST* 1.50.2.3.

[182] Cf. *De ver.* 1.9.

Now, man nevertheless has to undergo being's kenosis in his self-enactment, a kenosis that has its seal in the procession of the senses. The mere *apprehensio* of the form or of the *quod quid est* would fix the simple and complete "to be" in ideality for man; it would posit being and essence next to one another and negate being's transnihilation through to the concrete res, that is, annul the procession of the accidents in the moment of the ontological present. A direct apprehension of form, in other words, would deny the affirmation: "For us, only that which is composite subsists." It is thus only in the judgment, insofar as man judges that the thing exists in such a way that it "corresponds to the form which it apprehends about that thing,"[185] that man intends being itself, which always already concerns concrete subsistence. It is thus only then that he also properly grasps the *forma* and articulates the truth. The spirit, as the locus of truth, is the "space" that has been always already opened at every moment by being itself, in which the mediation of the entity in the basic outline of the ontological difference is generated by the spirit and comes to pass. It is thus that the spirit, in the self-reflection whereby it intends itself as the focal point of the ontological difference, mediates all that exists into its truth, insofar as the spirit brings itself to exhibition through the "concept of the ontological difference" that becomes ever more explicit. Otherwise, it would have to recapture in reflection the senses' extroversion—that is, ultimately, the will as love—which has to be enacted in every moment, and thus make everything historical always already a thing of the past. The sublation of the substance in its truth is thus the spirit's self-exhibition in the fundamental form of the ontological difference. It is here that the profound truth of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* lies hidden, but at the same time it is right here that we can see the abyssal perversion of this truth, namely, the "absolute knowledge" of the difference that has been sewn up into the concept, which we may understand as the legacy of logicized being.

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[183] *ST* 1.16.2.
[184] *ST* 1.16.2.
[185] *ST* 1.16.2.

B. Reason (Intellectus) as the Source of the Understanding (Ratio)

Man never grasps the essence of things in the act of simple apprehension.[186] He is always already in via, dividing and composing in judgment. Reason reveals its opening into superessential being both in the procession of sensibility and in the operation of judgment.

For the sake of being's exinanitio—that is, its superessentiality—reason is in via as ratio *discurrendo de uno in aliud*.

Therefore there are three acts that belong properly to ratio.[187] The first two acts are determined on the basis of the fact that the ratio is in a certain sense intellectus. But this comes into play in a twofold operation!

Intellectus concipit quid sit res. But with this, nothing has yet been decided regarding what belongs or does not belong to the essence in question. The essence is therefore grasped in the moment of positing, in which, if it is isolated for its own sake, there is likewise nothing decided regarding the judgment of existence. As pure *in se*, or positive reality, it corresponds to being in the crisis, that is, to the as-yet-unresolved "contradiction."

[186] Cf. on this J. Péghaire, "Intellectus et ratio selon S. Thomas d'Aquin," esp. part II, 75–83. Péghaire thinks through the relationship, but does not do so on the basis of being's movement of finitization.

[187] *In Post. Anal.* 1.1, lect. 1. no. 4 (cited in Marietti, 1952, 283).

"For there would be no need of composition and division if by apprehending the essence of a thing we grasped what belonged in it and what did not."[188] It is only when thought's movement in the enactment of the judgment of existence comes to completion, continues on past the positive reality, and enters into the bonum that knowledge occurs "through" the Yes or No decision. Thus, if the intellect's first operatio relates in a particular way to the essence, then one can say with Thomas that judgment aims at being. But a decision concerning the content of the essence is not made in a single judgment, which is what angels are able to do intuitively (!): "When an angel apprehends the nature of anything, he *at the same time understands whatever can be either attributed to it, or denied of it.* Hence, in apprehending a nature, he by one simple perception grasps all that we can learn by composing and dividing."[189]

Let us now turn our attention to the third act, which belongs to ratio insofar as ratio has its roots in the intellect. In *ratiocinatio,* the embodied spirit unveils itself in a particular way as reason in via: "It is by reasoning (*ratiocinando*) that men arrive at an understanding of the truth."[190] Thus ratio represents a lower degree of being with respect to the intellectus, but it unveils in turn nothing but the positivity of being. Reason would have fixed itself in the vacillation of being if it were not always already in via among the multiplicity of finite beings, awakened and illuminated by the likeness of the divine goodness: "The need for ratio stems from a defect in the intellect."[191]

Because reason draws its sustenance from the luminous night of being, its act of knowing occurs in the simplex apprehensio. But this precisely does not mean that the intellect hardens in the apprehensio; instead, as ratio, it has always already entered onto the wayfaring path. If the intellect were bound to the concrete facticity of the res, by contrast, then the ratio would never be capable in via of turning back to its origin and end, just as in this case, moreover, the one, unifying being would have gotten lost in the multiplicity of finite particularity. Thomas therefore says: "The discourse of ratio always begins from an understanding (*intellectu*) and terminates in an understanding (*intellectum*),"[192] and "it is through discursion that ratio comes to know what the intellect knows without it."[193] Human reason, as ratio or understanding, thus results from the transnihilation of the superessential "to be," which unveils itself in the accidents of the material res in its bonicity. Just as the essence pours itself out into the accidents in obedience to the necessary sense of being and is therefore in via in its existence, so too does reason pour itself out in the understanding by virtue of precisely this bonitas. If it goes astray, then the path of the human spirit is made a thing of the past in the absolute having-been of the simplex apprehensio or driven into the absolute future of the self-withholding being in endless progress. But this is only the flip side of a counterfeit movement of thought within the stubborn being that clings to itself and "grows old."

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[188] *SCG* 1.58.
[189] *ST* 1.58.4.1.
[190] *In de Causis* 6.
[191] *ST* 2–2.49.5.2.
[192] *ST* 2–2.8.1.2.

Even in the unfettered ratio, which pervades all dimensions of existence in our age, reason's "wayfaring path" is something that needs to be discovered and brought to rest in the transcendence toward being as being, from which it draws its sustenance. This rest is its origin and goal: "Reasoning is compared to understanding as movement to rest, or acquisition to possession."[194] But it remains the case that "the human intellect does not acquire perfect knowledge by the first act of apprehension; instead, it first apprehends something about its object, such as its quiddity, and this is its first and proper object; and then it understands the properties, accidents, and the various relations that belong to the essence. Thus it necessarily compares one thing with another by composition or division; and from one composition and division it proceeds to another, which is the process of reasoning."[195]

The ratio receives all its "reliability and certainty from the intellect,"[196] and its internal "necessity" shows itself "through a defect in the intellect.... Now, the name 'intellectus' is derived from an intimate penetration of the truth, while the name 'ratio' is derived from inquiry and discursion."[197]

Even though the quiddity (!) of the res is the proper object of the intellect, the truth is nevertheless not grounded in this quiddity: "Truth is founded more in the *esse* of the thing than in its quiddity, just as the name 'ens' is derived from *esse*."[198] The ultimate openness and power to penetrate that belongs to the spirit is not demonstrated most evidently in the speculative foregrasp out toward the "idea," which, conceived in terms of the essence, necessarily has a not-yet-negated otherness next to itself and has not yet absolved itself in its positivity;[199] instead, it is demonstrated in the question of being. But human reason can never "make its home" in the apprehension of being for the sake of the exinanitio of being, the bonitas of which comes to light both in the *numerositas entium*[200] and in the manifestation [*Aufbrechen*] of the essence in the accidents. Instead, reason is always already sent onto the "little way," by being itself in the risk of thought: "But ratiocination is a certain motion of the intellect *proceeding* (*transeuntis*) from one thing to another."[201]

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[193] *ST* 1.59.1.1; cf. 1. *Sent.* 34.1.3 and *ST* 2–2.49.5.2.

[194] *ST* 1.79.8.

[195] *ST* 1.85.5; cf. *In de Trinit.* 6.2.

[196] *ST* 2–2.49.5.2.

[197] *ST* 2–2.49.5.2–3.

[198] 1 *Sent.* 19.5.1.

Thus the ratio proceeds from the intellectus. But because being's transnihilation in obedient reason nevertheless makes manifest precisely the positivity and fullness of being in its infinite simplicity, Thomas therefore goes on to say: "What is highest in our thinking is *not* ratio, but intellectus, which is the *originating source of the ratio*."[202] But the ratio is "as it were a defective intellect,"[203] and as such it represents the positive epiphany [*Durchstoß*] of the intellectus apprehensivus entis as it travels along the path.

c. Reason in the Essentiell Dimension of "Pure Reality"

i. The Temptation of Pseudo-subsistence and the Intellect as the Source of Ratio

We said earlier that what we mean by "metaphysics as reenactment" first comes properly to light when we have achieved the metaphysical unfolding of man from the root of being at least in its basic outline. This achievement in turn opens up the possibilities of unfolding, in a wholly concrete way, the individual stages of the moment of finitization and interpreting man in his "being there" in every moment [*jeweiligen "Dasein"*] and his historical being-in-the-world—in other words, of unearthing the onto-logical root from historicity. We have made repeated attempts to carry out this ontological reduction. Such a labor, however, cannot be completed by a single person but requires conversation among many in a collaborative community; it requires the cooperation of those who have already undertaken the task of learning in a genuine way to perceive the ground that opens the possibility of elaborating a "metaphysics as reenactment."

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[199] Cf. Part A, chap. III.2, this volume.
[200] Cf. Part A, chap. V.3.B.2, this volume.
[201] *SCG* 1.57.
[202] *SCG* 1.57.
[203] *SCG* 1.57.

In what follows, we offer just a few indications with respect to a tiny fraction of the questions that cluster around this point. How should we characterize the sort of thinking that has succumbed to the temptation to substantialize being with respect to the relationship between intellectus and ratio?

Ratio springs from the intellect. It is reason in via, underway along a path that extends all the way to the outermost externality of the senses. The senses are, indeed, also "a certain deficient participation in intellect."[204]

The hypostasis of being, which refuses to hand itself over in reason's self-enactment and thus neutralizes love, forces the essence outside of being as its other. The *ens* therefore gets swallowed up by the res. Reason is absorbed into the ideal vacillation of being and accumulates there. It finds itself at the center of the absolute will to power.

But the formal structure of the movement of finitization and its order as the theme of man's self-actualization is retained even in the most extreme perversion, according to the analogy of error. We saw that reason reveals its positivity "in via," in the same way that being remains "itself" within the multiplicity of finite beings. Now, the moment that reason pulls itself back into the vacillation of being—or, in other words, the moment that being takes hold of itself and is hypostasized as a concept—both the dimension of the materially enduring reality and ratio are cut off from being and constituted as things in themselves, for the essence that multiplies and divides falls outside of being. Moreover, the "unity of the essence per seipsam" ceases to be necessary, since being no longer has any need of mediation. Thus the self-enclosed essence likewise founders in the multiplicity of appearance and simply extends itself into that multiplicity. It achieves a pseudo-multiplicity in the world of beings. Reason is now *in via* in precisely *this* reality. In truth, though, it has absolutely no *via* anymore, but rather finds itself involved in ceaseless activity. The intellectus collapses into ratio, and ratio collapses into sensibility.

The omnipotence that thought presumes in its thinking of being in the crisis unveils itself at the same time as being's impotence, its abandonment to the absolute essence, which is an essence that no longer receives being. But if being retains the formal structure of its mediation through the essence even in this perversion, then it cannot avoid attempting to come "to itself" through the nonreceptive essence. This can be done only in one of two ways: either being hands itself over helplessly to the essence and lets itself be used by the essence, in which case thinking collapses into absolute positivism, or being negates the closure of the self-enclosed essence and opens it up, so to speak, through violence. In this case, being requires the negation of this negation in order to be mediated, and this negation therefore diminishes its power. In both cases, reason is "submerged in the baptism of the understanding" (Hegel).

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[204] *ST* 1.77.7.

Here, the speculative enactment of being's finite subsistence (in the return to the essence) is completely dissolved. The word—in which the entire compass of man's return to himself has its distinctive form, center, and goal—either collapses into the image—that is, into the image-concept of the generalized appearance—or it turns into the univocal, self-enclosed "essential concept" (on the basis of the apparent possibility of a determination of the essences and essentiell differences from out of the vacillation of being). In this case, the image, as an appearance that has been gathered up and imaginatively fashioned into a unity, is no longer "sublated" in the word.

Now, Thomas says that "the act of understanding [intelligere] ... is to the actual intellect what 'to be' (*esse*) is to actual being (*ens in actu*)."[205] But because in this case being is related to the actual entity in the mode of pseudo-subsistence (in ideality), it follows that knowledge is related to the actually known thing in the same mode that we presented above. Being founders in the reality that in turn collapses into itself. The only thing left is being's constant desire to affirm itself, a desire that ends in futility and that has to "fail," because the essence's unitas per seipsam fragments insofar as it no longer comes under the sway of the necessary sense of being. It is no longer reason *itself* that is in via. Instead, it finds itself in the abstract status of the "pure path." It exhausts itself in the search, in the *coagitatio*, from which comes the "busy activity" of its movement from one thing to the next. Just as being is no longer mediated and affirmed in its positivity by the essence, so too there no longer is any internal activity, but only a constant ecstasis outside of self that has always already taken place. Thomas is therefore quite right to say: "the act of understanding ... is to the actual intellect what 'to be' is to actual being; since the act of understanding does not signify an act going out from the intelligent agent, *but an act remaining in the agent*."[206] But if the light of being founders in the opaque positing of the factical reality, then perceiving reason degenerates into an *actio transiens*. On the basis of this experience of being, in which reason's apprehension has degenerated into an act of setting loose the understanding's unconstrained spontaneity, the subject must necessarily cast over the world the veil of (human) claims that challenge. Man projects into the world the metaphysical character of demand; he no longer sees the world as a gift that has been reserved for him, in the same way that the res, because of the self-enclosed essence, is no longer open to being, but has hardened into an opaque "thing-in-itself."

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[205] *ST* 1.34.1.2.

ii. The "Absolute Concept" and the Analogicity of Being

In this light, it is easy to see that the human reason that has collapsed into ratio and has exhausted itself in moiling about in a world emptied of all ontological necessity has no other means for asserting its will to power than the ultimately impotent "power" that it has arrogated to itself in the pseudo-subsistence of being, that is, within the sphere of the mere concept of being. At the very moment that reason becomes imprisoned in the appearance of things, impotent to apprehend being (because it is absolutely limited to the res), mercilessly abandoned to the "ever other" (aliud-quid as the supreme law!), and unable to "read into" (intellectus) the essence of beings (determined *ad unum* in the dimension of appearance), it thinks itself capable of knowing everything, unto its deepest roots. It seeks to multiply this knowledge still further and to increase it in order to get a grip on the reality that has slipped from its grasp and to bind it up even more securely. The more intensively reason makes this effort, the more profoundly it roots itself in the hypostasis of being—that is, the more it clings to the pure essence—which being no longer needs to externalize itself. Thinking thus repels being from itself precisely in its grasping after that which actually exists. Man thereby secretly alienates himself from the world. He becomes homeless! Because the world slips away from him, he is anxiously driven to a state of despair regarding his ability to prevent the world from slipping away by conceptualizing it ever more intensively. To the extent that the ground of the positive reality withdraws from him, his thinking becomes groundless. In the face of the abyss that opens up under the fixed, substantialized being in ideality, the angst of this collapse into nihilism emerges as a sinister danger. But the saving power grows along with this danger, since the angst is only the manifestation of reason's inability to come to a stop in the vacillation of being; it is simply the opportunity (!) that being itself offers to us for reason to enact a new transnihilation of being, an opportunity that ought to be received in gratitude.

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[206] *ST* I.34.1.2.

But if man does not accept the angst, if he blusters further into pseudo-subsistence, then he necessarily falls victim once again to the abyssal groundlessness of an "unrestrained" reality and the vicious circle continues to spin. On account of the nonreceptive essence, the *conceptus* of being—that is, the "pure concept"—is born without any conception [*conceptio*]—"an intellectual concept which is absolutely essential to the act of understanding."[207] Thinking no longer exists as thanking.

The word that proceeds from the enactment of the movement of finitization, and thus bears witness to being as love, exhibits the intrinsic character of its origin. It is opened up from its depths to the superessential "to be," and its self-finitization in the word comes to expression through reason. To be sure, the word is the known essential form of things, but it can never negate the superessential scope of the light of being. It therefore always remains surrounded by and received into the depths of man, who is the focal point of the ontological difference and the one whose task it is to undergo being in its superessentiality. This *conceptus* is not univocal. It is not a merely fixed essence, a given label, so that the words would lie rigidly adjacent to each other in the sense of radical equivocity.

The word does not represent the absolute, univocal vacillation of being, because it bears witness to love and being's self-finitization. Since it is the "center" of being's movement of finitization, it is also the center of the analogy of being. It cannot be understood either from the perspective of the univocal, ideal vacillation of being or from the perspective of the equivocity of dissociated realities.

The analogous *conceptus* is resistant to univocity from the ground up, according to its origin in the reception of being, because the analogicity of being comes to expression in it.[208] But, in univocity, the emergence into the superessentiality of the difference is blocked. The word, interpreted in this case as the known essence of things (which corresponds to the posited, self-enclosed essence), therefore turns into an abstract, identical fixum. It is labeled as something that is always already complete, an "old word" that has no path and has already brought everything behind itself; the "young hope" (Péguy) is no longer present in it. The only thing left over is the univocal concept. The word has lost the superessential free space given by the light of being. It therefore no longer gathers up and unifies thinkers in conversation with each other in relation to being.

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[207] *De pot.* 9.5.

[208] Cf. Part A, chap. IX, this volume.

The reason that has collapsed into ratio produces nothing but this "crystal clear concept." Whatever does not submit to this concept is dismissed as "irrational." The light of reason in its morning freshness and brightness has yielded to the "clear concept," the *essentia pura*. This concept, though it is nothing more than a slick "fraud" ["*Schwindel*"],[209] lords it over being by virtue of the unity of the essence. This "unity" contains no constitutive parts; by contrast, the concrete existence of the essence is mediated in the procession of the accidents by the ontological moment of bonitas. The non-necessity of the parts (negation) is now split off from the ideated univocity (abstract unity) of the "pure concept," which imagines itself to be more than an *analogous conceptus*; indeed, it acts out of the pseudo-subsistence of being, which likewise has exchanged pseudo-fullness in its self-presumption for the reception and finitization of being "through" the essence. In the dominance of the ratio, the analogous concept has collapsed into barbarism. This power of the understanding is the mastery of the sophist, who says, "Being is, non being is not." Here, being, as completum et simplex, is made "univocal" to such a degree that its "nonsubsistence" gets posited next to it. The convertibility of being and "nothing" is therefore dissolved and analogy annulled. The sophist proves to be incapable of thinking in terms of analogy, but only in terms of the "pure concept," which then ultimately reaches its peak in the purest and highest of all concepts, the concept of being. In that very moment, however, thinking collapses into the "Yes and No at once" of the ambiguous hypostasis of being. One no longer thinks *De ente et essentia* (Thomas), but now *De conceptu entis* (Christian Wolff).[210]

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[209] Cf. what was said above concerning angst; man is "swindled" in the hubris of the hypostasis of being.

[210] No less interesting is the title of the Wolffian ontology: "Philosophia prima sive Ontologia methodo scientifica pertractata, qua omnis congitionis humanae principia continentur." What follows from this title is the fact that the principles no longer spring from being itself; instead, since being has turned into a concept, they have their home in "science."

iii. Absolute Definition and Quantity

When ratio dominates, being gets posited next to the entity and wholly absorbed into the thinking subject. It turns into the potential and material of the defining ratio, which now intends, on the basis of being's pseudo-subsistence, to fix impermeable boundaries around each part, and make it "clear and distinct": *Esse ad lucem pertinet.*[211] But if being enters into the definition of the subsisting entity, then to delimit things in this way is to sacrifice being altogether to the negation of its nonsubsistence for the sake of the concrete res. Definitions now become the unlimited will to power's positing of existence, insofar as these definitions enable being to be led to its *determination* out of the helplessness of its indeterminacy and through the subjective mediation to subsistence. This occurs in a manner that is paradigmatic because it is at the origin: "it is the very definition of the thing (*ipsa rei definition*) in those things that have a definition."[212] If being is abandoned to the essence, then at that moment it becomes a part of the definition as genus.

God himself falls under the definition, since the absolutizing of the essence "on the side of the finite" coincides with the setting apart of the essences in the divine intellect; the divine essence, as known, is then included within the finite quiddity as an "extension" thereof. In a certain sense, God's essence gets speculatively separated from his being. In other words, we have the precise opposite of what Aquinas says in *De pot.* 7.3.4: "Hence the definition of substance cannot be applied to God, whose quiddity is not distinct from his esse. Wherefore God ... is *above all substance.*"[213] In the same way, as we said above, to subject all things to definition is to sacrifice the superessentiality of the "to be" and to essentialize the real potentiality of matter, which is related in a special way to superessential being; it is, in other words, to turn matter into an *essentia inchoata per modum potentiae.*[214] But if matter and form are folded into each other in this way, then the pure concept, insofar as it designates the "pure essence," is no longer able to transcend the material dimension, because this latter has been a perfect prison for the essence. We may develop this idea further by reflecting on the fact that the first disposition of the matter of a natural thing is the *quantitas dimensiva*. It belongs to

[211] Augustine, *En. in Ps.* 7.19.

[212] 1 *Sent.* 2.1.3.

[213] Cf. also *De pot.* 7.3.5.

[214] Cf. Part A, chap. VIII.3, this volume.

the essence of the corporeal natural thing that its accidents are not immediately related to its subject, but require the mediation of this "first accident," "through" which they are able to be both ex-ported, emanating from the subject, and im-ported into the subject, even though the substantial ground has its being precisely in, through, and with the emanation, export, and return mediation through the accidents. Thus, regarding the accidents, Thomas says: "they are related to their subject through the medium of dimensive quantity ... all accidents remain founded upon *dimensive quantity*."[215]

But it was the "ontological presence" of being that made possible the intelligibility of the accidents. The finite entity is positively affirmed; that is, it is "there" in concrete subsistence only through, in, and with the procession of the accidents in the moment of the bonum.

What happens, then, if being's self-affirmation through reason ends up in a process in which the res gets sealed off from being in the crisis and is taken to be an essence that is always already "definitively posited"? What happens when the ontological moment of the bonum, which is when being accedes to the "inseity" of the res, remains a task that is yet to be achieved? The "definitive" substance must necessarily seal itself off from the futile enactment of mediation through the accidents or, what amounts to the same, must lose itself in the accidents in the never-ending process of futile self-affirmation. Being's radical "having-been" in the substantial core implies the futility of the ontological ad-vent of being toward itself and the total dissolution of being in the mediating accidental dimension, which now presents itself as the absolutized field that mediates between reality and ideality.

The always already finished substantial ground thus gets dissolved on the one hand by the accidents, in which being now comes to itself—that is, carries out its "movement into subsistence"—as if the accidents were an isolated sphere. This corresponds in the realm of thought, on the other hand, to the being that reason's "foregrasp" brings to its mediation out of the res in the actu secundo.

But at the level of the entity, the necessity of being gets transposed into the absolutely posited externalization of the substantial ground. Because no return to the essence from the external dimension—no *subsistere*—is possible, the subsistence has its home entirely in the accidental realm, or, in other words, it is first posited in the secondary acts of actualization. But since nothing is yet decided in the dimension of the accidents taken in themselves concerning the true subsistence of the entity—or, in other words, the decision of the movement into subsistence remains open—this metaphysical "status" corresponds to the ambiguity of reason in the vacillation of being (i.e., the not-yet-negated *non subsistens*).

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[215] *ST* 3.77.2.

But we saw earlier that this speculative a priori is identical with the separation of the intellect from the ratio, or in other words with the collapse of the intellect into ratio. This collapse, however, is now enacted simply in the dimension of the accident, in which the substance must prove its "necessity"! The substantial ground, as detached reality, becomes ever more opaque in its isolation; it turns into the unknown "thing-in-itself." But the accidents nevertheless retain their grounding in the quantitas dimensiva. This dimension now stands forth in its "necessity"—indeed, it "represents" the ontological moment of bonicity, which mediates between ideality and reality. What emerges along with this dimension is, moreover, a pure externality of the appearance, which, "undetermined" as it is, becomes the field of the ratio that is caught up in sensibility. The circle thus closes once again. The medium in which the ratio operates is quantitatively dimensioned matter as the mediating dimension of the accident. Thus the hypostasis of being implies not only the enfeebling of being into a concept, but also at the same time the collapse of the intellect into ratio in the medium of quantity. Quantity mediates the universality of the form into the individual emergence of the appearance and the individually posited reality back into the universality of the form. But because the entity's subsistence occurs exclusively in this dimension, the movement into subsistence and reason's self-enactment are relegated to the medium of quantity and come into play therein in the relationship between the universal and the particular. The quantitas dimensiva is itself the mediation of the universal and the particular as *continuum in discretione*. Reason therefore cannot avoid entering into operation as understanding in its counting capacity, and here we discover the root of technologistic thinking.

Now, the sealed-up reality, the isolated substantial ground, on which the accidents "hang" is anything but a "ground." As a "pure essence" sealed up in itself, it falls apart, since there is no longer any self-mediation in and through the accidents on the basis of the bonum. The mediation from out of the innermost heart of the good is replaced by quantitas. But just as the movement into subsistence comes to decision in the bonum, so too the event of the subsistere now occurs in the mediating pseudo-bonicity of the *materia quantitate signata*. The categories of the universal and the particular are the only things that remain. But it simply cannot be otherwise, for once being has been incorporated into the definition of the creature and degraded into the potency of the unfettered ratio, it turns into a *genus*. Emancipated in the dimension of quantity, pseudo-subsisting being, as the potency of a definition, "spits out" its pseudo-actuality and plunges calculating ratio into the frenzy of boundless progress; but being nevertheless continues to present itself as *perfectio perfectionum, actus actuum*, and *formale respectu omnium, quae in re sunt*, even in the most extreme perversion.

iv. Logicized Being and the Mathematizing of Thought

We can unfold the movement of this temptation in even deeper dimensions. If being degenerates into a genus, then it has become a "logical concept." Now, Thomas says, "Sometimes that which the name signifies is *not a similitude of the thing existing outside the soul,* but is something which follows upon *the mode of understanding the thing* which is outside the soul: and in this manner there are *intentions* which our intellect hits upon (*adinvenit*); just as the signification of this name 'genus' is not a similitude of anything existing outside the soul, but from this the intellect understands 'animal' as in many species, and attributes to it the intention of 'genus'; and in this manner it is allowed that the proximate foundation of the intention is not in the thing but in the intellect, while nevertheless the remote foundation is the thing itself.... And similarly this is the case with all other things which follow upon this mode of understanding, *as it is with mathematical abstractions and other things of this sort.*"[216]

We thus see here that the intentio is not the likeness of some entity that exists outside of the intellect. It is crucial that we keep this in mind! Once reason has become fixed in substantialized being, it is no longer possible for any movement of finitization to come to decision. There is no longer any genuine positing of the res, but only a reality that, in its isolation, collapses from within. To the same extent, man also turns into an isolated reality as one being among others; as *res cogitans*, he transcends reality henceforward only in rational discourse. Thus detached from the things that exist, reason has become not only the proximum fundamentum of the concept, but also the fundamentum, simply because being, insofar as it vacillates in ideality, has completely shifted into the thinking subject. Thus, it is precisely "being" that allows the subjective modus intelligendi to provide the measure for all things and allows those things to be mediated in this logic of being into their "subsistence."

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[216] 1 *Sent.* 2.1.3.

The decision of the word as *conceptio rei intellectae* comes to pass beyond the word in the superessential free realm of being. The decision of the concept, however, comes to pass in the univocity of the concept itself, because all the necessity of being has shifted into the essence, and there is "nothing" else, no "other," left beside the "pure concept." If "being" supervenes upon things now through reason's mediation, if being is determined as "pure intelligibile," then only one way remains for the subject to achieve certainty, or, in other words, there is just a single possibility for the subject to "let be" in reflection, that is, to enact the movement into subsistence wholly within itself: namely, *by knowing that things are known, for this is the only ground of the certainty that they participate in being and that they are constituted in finite subsistence.*

The logician as such is constantly tempted to logicize being in this way: "for the logician considers the way in which terms are predicated and *not the existence of a thing*."[217]

Now, Aquinas goes on to explain: "Since in the things themselves that are outside the mind there is *nothing that is a likeness of the notion of genus or species*. And yet the intellect is not in error: for the things reflected by these notions, namely genus and species, are not attributed by the intellect to things as existing outside the mind but only as existing therein. Because just as the intellect understands things existing outside the mind, so does it, by reflecting on itself, *understand that it understands them*: wherefore just as the intellect has a conception or notion to which the thing as existing outside the mind corresponds, *so has it a conception or notion to which the thing corresponds as understood*: for instance, to the notion or conception of a man there corresponds the thing outside the mind, *while nothing but the thing as understood corresponds to the notion or conception of the genus or species*."[218] If the intellect knows itself in its return to itself, then the *conceptio rei intellectae* comes forth within this reditio as verbum cordis. But by bending back upon itself, the intellect also comes to know that the beings are known. If this knowing of beings' being known comes about by thinking's being bound to self-withholding being in ideality, however, then the reflection upon reflection is elevated as reason's sole standard, and thus reflection on the concept is turned into the sole theme of metaphysics. Metaphysics henceforward has nothing else to occupy itself with other than further specifying this concept and thus proving that it is a "science."

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[217] *Met.* 7.17.

[218] *De pot.* 7.6. "The logician does not ask himself whether a particular assertion is true or false in itself, that is, whether it conforms or does not conform to a certain reality exterior to the mind, or more specifically whether it is able to be confirmed or contradicted by a certain experience or ulterior operation." E. Goblot, *Traité de Logique*, 7th ed. (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1941), 43.

The "pure (!) logician" thus abstracts in a certain sense from the necessary sense of being, which orders being into finitude, into its subsistence. He gets stuck in one way or another in the vacillation of being and therefore precisely fails to see the essence in its full positivity as the obedient space of being's transnihilation. He therefore abstracts from being's ratio boni, which is connected to the superessentiality of the "to be." The "pure logician" has in view only the always already finished concept in the dimension of a univocal essence that being has not yet managed to burst open. If thinking enters into its operation on this basis, then it immediately projects substantialized being into ideality, which negates its nonsubsistence and therefore achieves mediation only through the dissolution of the pure contradiction. This contradiction is the necessary ground in which "pure logic" has its roots.

Let us note the connection between "pure logic," "pure reality," and "pure ideality" in their ontological significance, which is something we have encountered repeatedly before; moreover, we ought to see the connection that all these bear to the dissolution of the word, which draws its sustenance from the ontological difference, into the "univocal concept," and finally to the elimination of being's superessentiality. Because being's exinanitio is already negated in ideality, "to be" is henceforward grasped only as a pure *completum et simplex*. This is the foundation for the emancipation of univocity from analogy, which in turn summons absolutized equivocity as its flipside.

A thinking that abstracts the persisting reality from the crisis of being must of course make an effort to achieve the opening up of the being that lies there before it in itself into difference, because reason, since it is bound as "consciousness" to the immediacy of the given reality in itself, comes to itself through the mediation of the same, that is, becomes self-consciousness in freedom and thus at the same time leads the given back to its ground.

But this mediation cannot be achieved in the dimension of the "logicized spirit," since spirit thus interpreted has always already made all mediation a "thing of the past" and thus negated being's exinanitio. The "logicized spirit" therefore pervades "pure logic"; indeed, it is the medium in which this logic exists, since pure logic neutralizes the decisiveness of being in the good!

But regarding mathematical entities, Thomas says: "inasmuch as they are abstracted from motion and matter, they cannot have the aspect of an end, which itself has the aspect of moving another."[219]

We saw earlier that ratio, when it is made absolute, extinguishes the necessary sense of being. But annulling the ratio boni also dissolves the moment of the ontological present. The entity is no longer an "appetibile," or, in other words, the ratio finis is eliminated, for *bonum habet rationem finis*. Once we see this, we understand the significance that mathematics possesses in this context. The fact that *mathematica abstruntur a materia* is rich with implications. Didn't matter disclose itself to us as being's nonessential "potency-for-concrete-existence" ["*Daseinsmöglichkeit*"], insofar as matter reveals in a particular way the pull to subsistence, which occurs out of love, and indeed the superessentiality of the "to be"? Does it not therefore amount to the same thing to say, "they are abstracted from matter, from the aspect of an end" and "from the aspect of the good" for "the good has the aspect of the end"?[220]

Yes it does! The ratio, which is in via from one thing to another, is related to the intellectus as movement to rest, insofar as the intellect is the "origin and end of movement."[221] Because the necessary sense of being brings the reason that has been awakened by being onto the path from one thing to the other, reason (intellectus) becomes explicit in a particular way in mathematics, insofar as the mathematical objects are abstracted from movement and from the finis. The perceptive power of the intellect in the crisis of being is set into relief, and at the same time so is being as *completum et simplex*. The dimension of being's ideality stands out more sharply, and in fact mathematics is in a particular way empowered to make this dimension of being's ideality explicit.

Conversely, being no longer explicitly comes into speculative view in its

[219] *ST* 1.5.3.4.
[220] *ST* 1.5.1.2.
[221] Cf. *De ver.* 15.1.

nonsubsistence, or else being's nonessential potency-for-concrete-existence—that is, matter—would immediately have to come forth as the determining factor, and being's ratio boni and finis would become manifest. But this is precisely what falls outside of the purview of mathematics.[222]

What happens when being as *completum et simplex* is thus grasped specifically as isolated for its own sake? On the one hand, the *univocity of being* thus acquires a heightened importance. We already saw this in our interpretation of the analogy of being. But, moreover, thought's "coming to a standstill" in the ideality of being runs the risk of splitting off the material reality, that is, the dimension in which man as embodied spirit is historically always already in via. This is why what is presupposed here is precisely the abstraction from movement and from the finis: reason plants itself in the vacillation of being and remains closed to the transnihilation that occurs at the bidding of the necessary sense of being, which means that reason gets absorbed even more profoundly into the "movement" of ratio, since the abstraction from matter and movement separates being only too easily as *completum et simplex* from its crisis, substantializes it, and thus subordinates reason to ratio.

Mathematics, precisely because of its original roots in ideality, thus runs the great risk of foundering in the sphere of the isolated material (!) quiddity and being constituted in this dimension as the "science of absolutized ratio." The progression of thought shows that mathematics has in fact ended up in one of the "pigeon holes" of the natural sciences, even though it has no business being there in principle.[223] But all this has its ground in the fact that the abstraction from matter harbors within itself the temptation to eliminate the necessary sense of being from thought and thus to keep being in the pseudo-vacillation of ideality.

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[222] This becomes unambiguously clear when we consider the place of mathematics in relation to the other sciences (cf. on this general question Aquinas's expositions in *In de Trinit.* 5 and 6). Thomas says, "We conclude that there are three kinds of distinction in the operation of the intellect. There is one through the operation of the intellect joining and dividing which is properly called separation and this belongs to divine science or metaphysics." (We have already treated this theme extensively in the first part of the present work; on the theme of *separatio* in Aquinas, see L.-B. Geiger, "Abstraction et séparation d'après S. Thomas," *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 31 [1941]: 3–40.) He then goes on to say, "There is another through the operation by which the quiddities of things are conceived which is the abstraction of form from sensible matter, and this belongs to mathematics." *In de Trint.* 5.3. This passage has enormous significance! Let us note that the *formatio quidditatum* is nothing other than the simplex apprehensio of the quidditas rei materialis. As we have already seen, being's movement of finitization into the innermost heart of the bonum is "not yet" decided once reason has grasped the quidditas, and therefore at this point the crisis of being has ultimately "not yet" been undergone by finite reason in a certain sense.

[223] This is why Thomas goes on to say: "And there is a third through the same operation which is the abstraction of a universal from a particular, and this belongs to physics and to all the sciences in general, because science disregards accidental features and treats of necessary matters," *In de Trinit.* 5.3. But this does not occur *secundum operationem, qua formantur quidditates rerum*! The natural scientist, for example, does not have in view primarily the *forma a materia sensibili abstracta.*

Mathematics, as we have seen, aims in its abstraction from matter at the "simple and complete" being as being, and this aiming of course entails the danger that the *non subsistens* will lose its speculative weight or even disappear altogether.

But because matter as the nonessential determination of the essence (precisely in relation to being's superessentiality) is grasped in the medium of reality, we therefore have to say that mathematics opens up a way out of rationalism's collapse of thought into a neutralized facticity of the corporeal quiddity. In accordance with the operatio of concept formation, which always has simple being in view, mathematics must therefore overcome the domination of ratio, which radicalizes the pure transnihilation of being in the crisis and thus determines the root of nihilism. To say it again: the formation of the concept can be carried out only with a view to being as *completum et simplex* in the crisis (cf. sections 1.D and E above).

From this perspective, it is complete nonsense to make mathematics responsible for the total logicizing of thought and the predominance of an unfettered ratio that busies itself with calculations without ever leaving the sphere of reality in its quantitative dimension. Precisely the opposite is the case! We can state this emphatically: mathematics runs contrary to all "rationalism." It rescues thought precisely from its imprisonment in the mere facticity of the res because it allows thought to transcend the res into simple being as being. Therefore the attacks that so many metaphysicians today mount against the "mathematicizing of thought" represent proof that rationalism has not been overcome; instead, these attacks confirm that rationalism has won precisely insofar as they presuppose that reason's apprehension of being is opposed to the discursive path of ratio. To take this opposition for granted is to fall to the temptation of negating being's exinanitio and establishing being as a hypostasis.

But we must nevertheless keep in mind that a danger lurks in this mathematical transcendence, which, in its formation of the simple essence, simultaneously and just as originally aims at *esse simplex et completum*. We cannot ignore the fact that, by transcending into a realm that abstracts from movement and matter, thought faces the great temptation to negate the necessary sense of being, which is sealed in the ratio boni, to dissolve the superessentiality of the "to be," to trap the necessity of being in ideality and thus to substantialize being in the absolute dominance of logic. In this sense, it remains the case that mathematics has a special role to play in thought's various temptations.

"Pure transnihilation" hands being in its helplessness over to the essence. But mathematics overcomes this absolutized transnihilation; it lifts man beyond his imprisonment in the "having-been" of the enduring reality, which is why mathematics had an eminent position in Greek metaphysics in its struggles with mythology. Once the mathematicity of thought has been discovered, then we have already taken the first step toward the superessentiality of the "to be."[224] Even though mathematical objects are abstracted from movement and matter, they nevertheless aim in a certain sense—in contrast to thought's restriction to the dimension of mere reality—at being's superessentiality. Therefore the process of thought shows that wherever this "mathematicizing of being" has gone astray, being cannot avoid falling prey to the essentialism of the factical res. But the moment being gets substantialized in ideality, and the bonum gets identified with the now abstract, univocal verum, then the rationalism of absolutized ideality necessarily implies the irrationalism of logicized love. The abstract identity of "empty being" in this case needs to be mediated by pneumatic reason. The transformed voluntas divina negates the negation—that is, it negates the protrusion of the essences in the divine intellect—through the creative positing of the essences *ad extra*.

To put it in the terms of supernatural revelation, this irrationalizing of thought precisely by means of "absolute logic" is revealed as the Logos-izing of the Holy Spirit. In order to be able to carry out this negation of the negation, the Holy Spirit has to be subsumed, so to speak, into the Logos that has been determined and limited by the negation. This presupposes that he is "still" separated from the Logos with respect to the sublation of the negation, so to speak, in the *signo primo*. In other words, the Absolute has "not yet" been revealed as "Spirit," that is, as negation of the negation. Thus the logicizing of the Holy Spirit implies precisely his alienation from the Logos. But if the various natures are *idem cum ipsa* in the divine essence—that is, if they are *nihil*, precisely because the "Spirit" is always already Spirit of the

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[224] It would be good to illuminate the history of Greek thought from this perspective, with respect to mathematics' mediating position between physics and theology and above all in view of the fact that being is set apart here in its superessentiality as "pure mediation," albeit in an as yet hidden way. (Cf. on this Part A, chap. III.2, this volume.)

Logos and God is always already himself in absolute positivity—then he is also bound to the natures *in concreto*, even though his always already being "Spirit of the Logos" makes evident that he does not come forth only to negate the negation. Otherwise, the Spirit would stand against nature, the "free spirit" would stand against the stubborn res. One would then have to "secure" for oneself a dimension of "responsible," indifferent freedom in "feeling," in "limit situations," and indeed even sometimes in distorted forms of "situational ethics," which has its own validity apart from and in opposition to the essentialized actuality of the "static" res. Reason turns into the adversary of the soul, of life.

But in reality, the mathematizing of thought stands and falls with its superessentiality. Being as *completum et simplex* in the sense of infinite fullness can be grasped only if it is manifest in the exinanitio of its not clinging to itself. But the exinanitio is not the a priori condition (!) for the self-manifestation of being as fullness in the sense that being would need the exinanitio in order to legitimate itself in its infinite actuality. In this case, the exinanitio would turn into a function of the self-affirmation of a being that is already identical to itself a priori in ideality.

But one has to keep an eye on the monstrous temptations that beset thinking on account of mathematics precisely in the light of *esse completum et simplex*. The abstraction from this finis, from movement, and from matter implies a neglect of the good in being and an emphasizing of ideality, whereby in a certain sense the positing of the essence is taken out of the speculative pursuit of the movement into subsistence. What is at issue here is an extremely critical situation. If mathematics does not take seriously the *completum et simplex*, then being would never be able to be determined as "pure mediation"; the overemphasis on the *non subsistens* would force thought to retreat to the factical reality. While the radicalizing of the transnihilation also allows the essences to become explicit in God, being in its infinite simplicity demonstrates the impossibility of taking such a step; indeed, the "mathematizing of thought" precisely contradicts the logicizing of the "spirit." But it also entails the danger of thought coming to a standstill in the crisis of being.

If the genuine "mathematicity of thought" is disclosed, then thinking in the crisis of being does not have to secure itself against the necessary sense of being; to the contrary, the necessary sense properly brings thought into the light insofar as thinking transcends the posited reality into the simplicity of being and thus discovers the roots of the entity's being caused, precisely in the imprint of the "uncaused character" that it receives from its participation in being as being. In other words, the necessary sense of being discloses being's movement of finitization. We have already discussed this at length above in our exploration of the relationship between participation and causality.

If the ratio boni is not immediately evident in mathematics, this is because of the existence of the crisis of being, which does not allow itself to be identified a priori with the necessary sense of being, the ratio boni! Nevertheless, the necessary sense of being pervades the crisis of being. Because of this crisis, being is never itself in a pseudo-subsistence, but only through its transnihilation into the finite. The great temptation arises to defer the necessary sense and to isolate being in its crisis, precisely because these two dimensions are not identical.

But the bonum unveils itself to us even in the speculative unfolding as "what comes last": "Truth is prior to the good."[225] Even though, prior to the entire movement of finitization, the bonum is always already the pervasive power of the crisis of being toward subsistence, there nevertheless exists a dimension of the ideality of being that cannot be equated a priori with the bonum. In this sense, the bonum does not empty itself, or otherwise it would not be able to be both what comes last in the speculative enactment of the participation of being and at the same time to pervade the crisis of being as the "beginning" and the abiding source of the movement of finitization.

What is sealed in the bonum is the fact that the res has not absorbed being as complete and simple into itself, and thus the fact that the foregrasp out toward the one, unifying being is necessary to thought precisely on the basis of the res.

The bonum, which corresponds to the will, thus "allows" being's movement of finitization to be carried out and being "to come to itself," which is why the good alone allows us to understand that there is such a thing as an *abstractio a ratione boni*. This abstraction so to speak can aim at the *pure completum et simplex* and relate itself to this (secundum rationem!)—and precisely therein be sustained by the ratio boni.

This is why Thomas also says, "Nor is it repugnant that there should be in some being *according to reason neither goodness nor the aspect of goodness*; since the idea of being is prior to the idea of goodness."[226]

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[225] *ST* 1.16.4 sed contra.

Thus the ontological shape [*Seinsgestalt*] of the good becomes evident in a particular way in mathematical objects, even though these objects do not subsist as *separata secundum esse*: "It is to be said that *mathematical entities do not subsist as separate in the order of being*: because if they subsisted, they would have goodness in them, namely, the goodness of their esse itself."[227] In being's *subsistere*, however, the necessary sense of being has its seal. Because of this, the mathematica are related to the ratio boni even though they abstract from it precisely *as* mathematica. Thus Thomas says, "The things which a mathematician studies are good according to the existence which they have in reality. The very existence of a line or of a number, for instance, is good. But the mathematician *does not study them according to their existence but only according to their specific formal character*. For he studies them abstractly, though they are not abstract in their existence but only in their notion. It was said above that good is not consequent upon the specific character *except according to the existence which it has in some real thing*. And so the note of goodness *does not belong* to a line or number as they fall within the purview of the mathematician, even though a line and a number are good."[228]

This passage shows that mathematical thinking entails the danger of a pure "logic." The foregrasp out toward simple being—that is, reason's "coming to a standstill" in the crisis—corresponds speculatively to the "beginning" of man's return from the sensible extroversion back to his essence in the exposition of the subsistere.

But we saw in section 6.C.ii above that man falls prey to the "pure essence" and to the univocal concept when he fixes his self-enactment on the *esse completum et simplex*. Here, it becomes evident how profoundly significant mathematics is for the speculative enactment of being's movement of finitization and how easy it would be for thinking to push its way into the absolutized reflection upon reflection. But in speaking about the abstraction of mathematical objects, Aquinas says: "They follow from the mode of understanding (*intelligendi*)."[229]

But because what is aimed at here is the *esse completum et simplex*—primarily against its exinanitio in the sense of transnihilation—the result is at the same time a speculative affinity for the univocity of being, the danger of the substantializing and logicizing of being into a conceptus entis, and the collapse of the intellectus apprehensivus entis into ratio.[230]

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[226] *ST* 1.5.3.4.
[227] *ST* 1.5.3.4.
[228] *De ver.* 21.2.4.
[229] 1 *Sent.* 2.1.3.

The mathematician contemplates number and line not according to their being, but only *secundum rationem speciei*. But this means that "the essential character of the true arises from the species itself in so far as it is understood as it is."[231] Thus, if we abstract from the ratio boni, then in the same speculative act, the theme of the intellect's relation to truth becomes ever more significant: "But the true is in some things wherein good is not, as, for instance, in mathematics. Therefore the true is prior to good."[232] In other words, the speculative overemphasis of the completum et simplex transposes the problematic of being, which is revealed in the ontological difference, into the problematic of the "intellect," for "in any being there are two aspects to be considered, *the formal character of its species and the act of being* by which it subsists in that species. And so a being can be perfective in two ways. It can be so just according to its specific character. *In this way the intellect* [!] *is perfected by a being* (*ente*), *for it perceives the formal character of the being*.... It is this mode of perfecting which the true adds to being. For *the true is in the mind*.... For this reason all who correctly define true put intellect in its definition."[233]

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[230] Cf. J. Maritain, "Sur la Doctrine de l'Aséité Divine," *Medieval Studies* 5 (1953): 39–50: "Esse, the act of existing, cannot be perfectly abstracted from the essences that exercise it, from the essences in which it is received, in the same way as the mathematical surface or line can be abstracted from the extended material subject" (48). "Here, I believe, in certain philosophers, we find what we might call the mathematizing of metaphysical concepts. They conceive metaphysical concepts, for example the concept of esse, the notion of esse, as if it were something that could be abstracted from its subjects in the same way, and just as completely, as a mathematical notion.... But this is to confuse the order of metaphysics with the order of mathematics, and to make esse, to make existence itself, a completely erroneous conception" (48). What we find in mathematics is the great danger of a hypostasizing of being, precisely on account of its abstraction from matter, which as being's nonessential "potency-for-concrete-existence" bears witness in an abyssal way to being's not clinging to itself (non subsistens!). "The logician and the mathematician consider things in their formal principles ... while the physicist studies individual matter (*determinatam materiam*)" (*De pot.* 6.1.11).

[231] *De ver.* 21.3.3.

[232] *ST* 1.16.4, sed contra.

[233] *De ver.* 21.2. The speculative overemphasizing of the "simple and complete" being over against its transnihilation through the essence, led to a dynamizing of the essence, which is why Leibniz says that the essentia appropriates an *existiturire* (*Opera philosophica*, ed. Erdmann [Berlin: Eichler, 1839–40], 147). What corresponds to this essence is the absolutizing of the divine ideality, which always implies mathematized thinking: "One can even say that God, insofar as he is a mind (!), is the originator of existence." "Discourse on Metaphysics," in *Philosophical Essays*, 67.

D. The Analogy of Being in the Relationship between Intellectus and Ratio

We saw that the relationship between reason (intellectus) and the understanding (ratio) can be determined only if being is speculatively experienced in its superessentiality. But the same root came to light for us in our interpretation of the analogy of being. Analogy, too, stands and falls with the convertibility of being and "nothing." We now ask, then, how and why the analogy of being comes into play in the relationship between reason and the understanding.

When it is essentialized, being collapses into the res. The unifying ground of being founders in the opaque particularity of the entity posited by the "absolute will." The intellectus apprehensivus entis falls prey to the unfettered activity of the understanding in the isolated reality, which is dissolved in the dimension of quantity in its appearance. Being achieves "validity" only *secundum diversas res*! The collapse of reason into understanding thus leads to pure equivocity. "With respect to those things that are equivocal as a result of chance or fortune (*per casum et fortunam*) we are unable to derive our knowledge of one thing *from what we know of the other*."[234] The same can be said for ratio in the dimension of absolutized reality.

One might raise an objection here, saying that the weight of the posited essence is predominant in reality, which means that the entity is indeed "determined" and the ratio, in its discursive movement from one thing to another, thus also stands in the pull of the essence! It therefore makes no sense to speak in this context of *aequivoca per casum et fortunam*!

But let us recall that, when it is detached from the "pure mediation" of esse, the positing of the essence ceases in fact to be a positing, for it has neutralized the necessary sense of being, which is the only basis upon which positing makes sense. Therefore the "positing of the essence" becomes a pure product of absolute arbitrary will and, in this case, is an "accident." We see here once again how profound and determinative the aberration is for man's entire self-actualization.

The "pure logic" of the absolutized understanding necessarily gets lost immediately in equivocation on account of its speculative a priori.[235] The movement from one thing to the other, whereby reason validates its obedience with respect to nonsubsisting being as being, cannot be achieved simply by positing a fragmented multiplicity of things. The only things left are the *diversae res*, and we can say: *Aequivocum dicitur secundum diversas res*. Thus ratio cancels itself out.

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[234] I *Sent*. 35.1.4.

[235] The being that has foundered in the establishment of the essence [*Setzung der Essenz*] turns into the "positing of the essence" ["*Position des Wesens*"]. Cf. Feuerbach, "Grundsätze einer Philosophie der

The same thing happens when reason gets trapped in "simple" being. This unveiled itself to us earlier as the path of absolutized univocity. Reason exhausts itself in its operation, then, in the determination of the multiplicity of mere "differences," in which the transnihilating pull into concrete subsistence, speculatively speaking, comes to naught: *Univocum dicitur secundum diversas differentias*. Reason ultimately draws its sustenance from being, which is always already "unified," and this is why the "path" is eliminated even in this case. In this sort of discursus, we end up only in the place where we "have already been." Thinking "spins its wheels" and "grows old."

Just as we were able to interpret the analogy of being only on the basis of the circumincession of being and "nothing," so too can we elaborate the relationship between intellect and ratio in a properly ontological way only in the dimension of the analogy of being. This relationship has its most profound roots in the thematic of being's movement of finitization. Both pure univocity and pure equivocity in the relationship between reason and understanding come to decision in the analogy of being. Just as univocity absorbs everything, so too equivocity causes the intellect to collapse into ratio. Thinking surrenders to both when it hands itself over to being's pseudo-subsistence. In this case, reason's "wayfaring" character is completely destroyed: "In the case of fortuitous equivocation, a name is attached to an object that has no relation to another object bearing the same name. Hence the reasoning *in which we engage about one cannot be transferred to the other*."[236]

E. The Destruction of Reason in Knowledge

"Pure logic" leads to the destruction of reason *in via*. Puffed up by the hubris of pseudo-subsistence, thinking strays around in undecided reality and

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Zukunft," §27: "Being is not a universal concept that can be detached from things. It is one with what exists. It is thinkable only in a mediated way—thinkable only by means of the predicates that ground the essence of a thing." (This is an absolutizing of the *constitutur per principia essentiae* [*Met* 4.2.556 and 558].) Thus Feuerbach continues: "Being is the *positing* of the essence (*Position des Wesens*). My being is the same as my essence.... After all of the essential qualities have been removed, being is simply your representation of being—a fabricated, invented being, a being without the essence of being."

[236] *Comp. theol.* 27.

attempts to subject beings to its mastery in the univocal and unmediated concept.

Being, as *ens indifferens*, is completely conceptualized. But because reason cannot come to a standstill in this "concept of being," it only fixes itself all the more intensively, following the secret dialectic of the contradiction (which is implied by "empty" being), in the individual, particular res, even though this absolutized pull toward reality in thought leaves nothing in its wake in turn other than the empty concept of being, "against" which then the "fact" is summoned all over again. Thus thinking is no longer free with respect to reality; it does nothing but react and oscillate in the whirl of the dialectic that occurs in the contradiction "between" the poles of the being that is coming to mediation and the res that must be eliminated as a thing-in-itself. From this perspective, we ought to listen to a passage from Feuerbach: "The being in Hegel's logic is the being of the old metaphysics, which is predicated of all things without distinction, because, according to this concept, all things agree in the fact that they exist. This distinctionless being"—indeed, it lacks any distinction because the ontological difference (!) was already closed in substantialized being—"is however an abstract notion, a notion without any reality. Being is as diverse as the things that are."[237]

The subject, which as an isolated ens cogitans is now separated from the object, must exert itself to liberate this object from its isolation and "bring it into the present." The "subject-object relation" becomes thematic, and one wonders how to bring about a relationship between the two. We have already discussed this above.

This "factical reality" is henceforward accessible only to the kenosis of the "worker," who brings it home and at the same time sets himself apart from it as free: The worker is the man who transcends himself so as to become his own master. Here, the exinanitio of being becomes a matter of "praxis," in which man mediates both himself and all beings and "re-creates" the world as a new human reality.

This "re-creation" derives from man's cognitional *repraesentatio* of things. But the cognition does not occur in order to perfect the knower—since this would presuppose that man enjoys an a priori perfection in truth and it negates the "initial condition" of the being that has not yet been mediated "in the spirit"—but in order to produce the "species." The degree of "subjective awareness" ["*Subjektivität*"] measures the extent to which the "species" has been successfully produced, that is, the extent to which the world has been humanized, recuperated, and transformed. Reality becomes a *factum*, something to be *achieved* [*Tat-sache*]! Thus a new sort of "intellectual spontaneity" is unleashed.

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[237] [Manfred Vogel, trans., *Principles of a Philosophy of the Future* (Bloomington, IN: Hackett, 1984), §27]. This ought to be compared with what was said in the preceding paragraph.

The specific form of the production of the species has to extend all the way into sensibility, for this too has arisen from the intellect. If thinking is dissolved as reason's constant internal circle of activity, then sensibility too is absorbed into the "production" of the species. It presents itself, just like spiritual knowledge, as an actio transiens.

But in reality there is no reason to accept a *species expressa* in the external senses and the common sense, since the senses immediately "intuit" ["*gewahren*"], insofar as the object is "present" and in a certain way "one" with the senses.[238]

It is only when man's embodied reality is isolated by an essence that has withdrawn into itself in opposition to being that man withdraws into himself on the path of the senses, and a breach emerges in the always already enacted beginning of knowledge in "the spirit's other." Man isolates himself in his being-in-the-world. Thus sensible knowledge also has to draw back from mere intuition into the isolated subject and demonstrate its act of knowing in the production of the *species expressae*, in which it proves that the object is "possessed."

Thus a disfigured version of "spontaneity" now emerges in the dimension of sensibility, which is expressed in "experience" ["*Erleben*"]. Sensuous intuition is called on to "taste" the entity in a new way. But here we find the specifically sensual form of "sensation." The only thing that brings the subject out of its isolation and "into an encounter" is a constant, hungry desire to make contact with the world that ultimately withdraws itself. But just as the concept of being dissolved the a priori perfection of the intellect in truth—because the intellect has always already "been" with being and lives out the theme of its finitization in concrete subsistence—so too does it annul the a priori perfection of the sensibility that springs from the intellect. Sensibility degenerates into a completely passive receptorium, which in turn means, considered from the perspective of the structure of being's movement of finitization, that being no longer sublates the potency that arises from it in its concrete subsistence; that is, it does not mediate itself through the corporeal essence, but remains separated from the essence in the vacillation.[239]

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[238] "It is, however, not the external sense that fashions for itself a sensible form; instead, it is the power of imagination that does this, the forms of which bear a certain resemblance to the intellectual word" (*Quodl.* 5.5.2.2); the externalization of the spirit in the senses gets sucked back into the subjectivity of the thinker when being is hypostasized, so that reason does not enter into its operation in "its other," which in turn simply demonstrates that it has not assumed the most extreme effort of openness to the superessential being that releases matter from itself as its "potency-for-concrete-existence" ["*Daseinsmöglichkeit*"].

We will now attempt to determine more precisely the truth of the a priori perfection of the intellect in the relationship between the intellectus agens and possibilis.

F. The Unfolding of the Intellectus Agens and Possibilis Out of the Crisis of Being

At several junctures along our path, we have experienced that there is a single movement of finitization, in which the *entity* comes to subsistence and *man* interprets himself as its focal point. The profound mystery of this "sameness" of being and thinking lies in the fact that thinking can never objectify being in its crisis, that is, in its circumincession with the "nothing." This sameness thus has its original proof in thinking as thanking, in which man lovingly liberates all that is, lets it be, and contents himself with the "little way" of being as outpoured love.

It is only on the basis of being's superessentiality that we can speculatively determine the sameness of thinking and being without having to assume two movements of finitization, one in which the entities, man included, come to subsistence, and a second in which man would "subsequently" have to reenact "conceptually" what had always already occurred.

The "sameness" of thinking and being cannot be systematized a priori in a context that would be "definitively determined" ["*festgestellt*"], persisting permanently in the sense of having essential validity. It is rather something that man always has to undergo anew at every moment, just as he enacts the ontological difference and reveals the essential core of his being in the rhythm of being's transcendental self-presentation. The crisis of being is the speculative "beginning" of man's self-presentation, which bears witness to itself in the extro-version and intro-version of love.

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[239] By contrast, Thomas sees intellect and sensibility as having an a priori perfection. This is because he never approaches reason apprehensivus entis as something "external" to being, which would imply that God's supreme gift has not yet in fact been given over, but is instead stuck inside itself originally in order subsequently to be mediated: The movement into subsistence "is" something always already decided, being is truly given, man is really and truly "there." Thus, regarding sensibility, Thomas says: "Once an animal has been generated it has its senses in the same way as a man who has been taught possesses knowledge. And when it actually senses it corresponds to the man who actually exercises his knowledge by thinking." *In An.* 2.12.9.

But if it is truly the case that reason draws its sustenance from the luminous night of the crisis of being, if the movement of finitization is nothing other than the exegesis of this crisis as the concrete theme of human existence, and if this in turn is the ground in which man's self-actualization has its roots, then human reason must reveal itself as luminous night, in its "sameness" with being. "Being" must exchange itself for "nothing," light for the night of the dimension of the receptive ground that is open to all things, in a paradigmatic way in reason itself, though of course this is not (!) to say that the "nothing," for which being exchanges itself in the crisis, can be identified with the receptive ground of the possible intellect that is open to all things.

But if sensibility arises from the intellect insofar as man says his Yes to being, which orders him out of the exinanitio in two directions at once, both into his own self-standing and into the world, then the convertibility of being and "nothing" also unveils itself in a paradigmatic way in the dimension of sensibility. It has to become evident in the senses that being (light) can never fill its *non subsistens* (night) by itself, that it can never illuminate and awaken it, that it can never be hypostasized on its own as *completum et simplex*, and that it can never actuate on its own the "nothing" for which it exchanges itself or place its essences in the ideal vacillation. Otherwise, being and "nothing" would be separate from each other, and being's nonsubsistence would already be "sublated" in the crisis.

But being can never negate its "nothingness" in ideality and come to itself, nor can it hold the "nothing" over against itself as absolute possibility (non ens) in order to make itself necessary "through" it, or to mediate itself to itself.

Reason would thus fail to enter into operation from out of its luminous night if it were to take the simple and complete light of being into itself immediately in ideality and thus were to relieve being of its nonsubsistence in the ideal vacillation! The light of reason does not shine into its night, into the darkness of its receptivity, in such a way that the light would be able to illuminate this darkness on its own. The light of reason cannot hold the darkness, the dimension of receptivity, over against itself and illuminate it as "possibility," in order thus to "affirm" itself. Precisely this would be the hubris of human reason in the identification with being!

Just as being enters into act from out of its crisis, so too does reason, in its sameness with being, enter into its operation from out of its luminous night only in the dimension of the positive, always already enduring, and given reality: "there" is thus where the illumination of the light into the darkness of the receptivity of reason take place.

The intellect apprehensivus entis thus "begins" in the dimension of sensibility; it perceives the things that are, and its proper object is the quiddity of the corporeal res. The luminous night of reason becomes evident in this perception.

If the entity is called a being on the basis of being, if being is the "act of acts," then the intellect, as light, is able to actuate—that is, "to *make*"—"everything" in its light. But because the luminous night of the intellect comes to decision in the dimension of the positive, sensible reality, this "actuating-in-the-light" means nothing other than the illumination of the sensibly given from its origin.

But this does not occur in such a way that it would produce a "pure" essence. If this were the case, the light would have once again posited itself as absolute and presumed a capacity to posit the essences out of being's pseudo-subsistence and to determine the essential differences. No, the "light" exchanges itself for its "nothingness," for the night, for the darkness of receptivity. "Lighting" as "actuating" does not mean immediately illuminating, immediately actuating the dimension of the dark night. Instead, it means "actuating" in the light of being the always already given, positive, "sensible" reality: *bringing the sensible reality into the intellect's apprehension!*

Thus reason reveals itself as capax for the crisis of being insofar as it is both intellectus agens: quo est omnia facere (light) and intellectus possibilis: quo est omnia fieri (night).

If we fail to see the convertibility of being and "nothing" in its proper sense—that is, if we sacrifice the *non subsistens* to the *completum et simplex*—then it implies that an immediate shining of the light into the intellect's receptive ground increasingly becomes the determining measure. But the emphasis on the *completum et simplex* meant an ever more intensive making explicit of being's ideality, into which the bonitas divina begins slowly to slide, which amounts to the same thing as a progressive essentialization of being. This is why the extreme forms of the doctrine of illumination always grow in the soil of an essentialist metaphysics.

But because the emphasizing of the *completum et simplex* goes hand in hand with the constant differentiation of the essences, of the *rationes aeternae*, in God himself, then this also implies that the path toward knowledge *in rationibus aeternis* becomes actual. This *cognitio in rationibus aeternis* is legitimate, because being, as "pure mediation," may not be dissolved into its nonsubsistence. Indeed, taken in general being signifies something "complete and simple."

The more we place the weight of being's necessity in ideality, however, and in this way neutralize the crisis of being, the more we render the intellectus agens superfluous: The crisis of being is no longer decided in favor of the positive reality, and so the intellect fails to enter in via perceptively in the dimension of sensibility.

The immediate illumination of the light of being—that is, the *cognitio in rationibus aeternis*—therefore does not yet suffice for an unfolding of reason that is adequate to its essence. In truth, the light exchanges itself for the night, the luminosity of the light is night "for" man, for the light of being becomes luminous only in and among the multiplicity of material beings. This is why thinking begins in the outermost dimension of sensibility.

The more the intellect thus retreats to being as "complete and simple" and at the same time distances itself explicitly from the decision of the convertibility of its potentiality with the light in the dimension of the sensibly given, the more originally "illumination" becomes sufficient unto itself. But if the crisis of being is brought to decision from out of its superessentiality—or, in other words, if being is not fixed against its nonsubsistence—this decision is nevertheless made positively in the dimension of the positing of the reality, and the "intelligible species received from things"[240] prove to be necessary.

We thus see that, on the basis of this speculative depth, the "opposition" that is commonly cited between Augustine and Thomas with respect to their respective metaphysics of knowledge can be resolved on the basis of a more original root. This root is in turn itself nothing but a small instance of the "metaphysics as reenactment."

The light of knowledge *in rationibus aeternis* is only light if being exchanges itself for the "nothing." If this is lost from view and instead the "pure light," which no longer has any need of *species a rebus acceptae*, shines into the receptive ground of the intellectus possibilis, then in the same moment this light turns into a false light, and being's superessentiality is absorbed into an absolutized *completum et simplex*.

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[240] *ST* 1.84.5, 1–2.91.2.

Therefore Thomas says that it is necessary that "the human soul knows all things in the eternal types, since by participation of these types we know all things. For the intellectual light itself which is in us, is nothing else than a participated likeness of the uncreated light, in which are contained the eternal types.... By the seal of the Divine light in us, all things are made known to us. *But* since besides the intellectual light which is in us, *intelligible species, which are derived from things, are required in order for us to have knowledge of material things; therefore this same knowledge is not due merely to a participation of the eternal types*, as the Platonists held, maintaining that the mere participation of ideas sufficed for knowledge."[241]

"Intelligible species, which are derived from things, are required in order for us to have knowledge *of material things*." ("Species exiguntur a rebus acceptae ad scientiam de rebus *materialibus*.") This means precisely that the dimension of being's superessentiality comes to decision in the nonessential dimension of matter! To the extent that this approach is reduced, the superessentiality of being in the crisis is also rendered indifferent (cf. section 2 above).

The intellectus agens thus has its ground in being as actus actuum. But this being "is" precisely "nothing" in the crisis of ideality. Being in its crisis interprets itself by the intellectus capax entis as luminous night and awakens the intellect to itself as intellectus agens and intellectus possibilis.

But the intellect sees its "objectum" in the light of being, to which nothing is external apart from nonbeing; perceptive reason stretches itself out in this way toward all things. "The intellect regards its object under the common ratio of being: since *the passive intellect is that 'in which all are in potentiality' (intellectus possibilis est quo est omnia fieri)*."[242] Just as the essences proceed from the act of all acts in the positing of the entity—because, as *non entia*, as "nothing" (which has to be understood properly!), they exchange themselves for being as being, and being in the crisis exchanges itself for the

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[241] *ST* 1.84.5.

[242] *ST* 1.79.7 and 1.82.4.1.

"nothing" and therefore first subsists concretely "through" the essences—so too is the intellect capax entis open to all concretely existing things.

Here, the whole abyss opens up of the temptation that immediately besets us when we enter into this speculative dimension. The *intellectus possibilis, quo est omnia fieri* is only too easily identified with the "nothing" for which being exchanges itself in the crisis. If the intellectus possibilis is able to receive all essences into itself, but the essences proceed from being insofar as nothing can be external to being other than nonbeing, then there seems to be no way to avoid approaching the intellectus possibilis as the "nothing" for which being exchanges itself, the being that allows all the essences to proceed from it.[243]

We have to make a precise distinction here! If the intellectus possibilis were the "nothing" that exchanges itself for being, then the intellectus agens would have to be the "being" that exchanges itself for the "nothing," the being that immediately actualizes the intellectus possibilis. In other words, reason would apprehend being as being and would no longer need to undergo being's movement of finitization in its "poverty" in order to enter into its operation from out of the outermost dimension of the concretely subsisting material quiddity.

But if this immediate illumination is negated, in opposition to the metaphysical constellation of the beginning, then the only thing left to justify the dependence on the sensible res is contradiction: the negation of the negation (appearance of the substantial ground) of the entity as positive affirmation of the entity in knowledge, wherein it "shows itself for what it is"; this is made possible in turn by the negation of the negation (nonsubsistence of being) by reason as the mediation of "empty being," wherein this latter "shows itself for what it is."

But Thomas says that the quidditas rei materialis is the *proprium objectum intellectualis*,[244] even though it is the *ens* "that falls first into reason's grasp."[245] These two statements belong together!

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[243] Siewerth says, "The first apprehension of the entity and of being is therefore not 'in every case' a simple abs-traction (*Hinnahme*) … but a judging and surveying grasping of being … whereby the measure of nonbeing that lies in the receptivity of a finite reason is repelled and enfeebled by being." "Definition und Intuition," *Studium Generale* 9, no. 10 (1956): 584. Being in the crisis (!), which exchanges itself for the "nothing"—i.e., does not subsist—cannot repel this nonbeing on its own without being beforehand substantialized against it.

[244] *De ver.* 1.12.

[245] *ST* 1.5.2.

Finite reason in its apprehension is opened up into being as being because it is in a certain sense "nothing." Its "essence," which is awakened by the superessential (!) light of being, is "nonessentialized" openness for being as being. But the gift/task of being opens up to reason as reason's owmost task in this—namely, to undergo the crisis of being in obedience to the necessary sense of being, or in other words—to avoid falling into the temptation to measure being as being against itself (as "nothing") and thus to fix or determine it in the ideal vacillation. Reason does this by testing being to see whether it clings to itself and thereby raises the state of having always already been loved first into an object of reflection (cf. Part A, chap. VI.1, this volume).

But just as the eye does not open itself up immediately to the light of the sun and receive that light as such, but instead perceives the light "as" the actualizing power that illuminates the multiplicity of appearing essences, so too does the intellectus possibilis never receive the pure light of being as such. Instead, it sees the "light of being" in the *intelligibilia* (cf. *SCG* 3.45): "hence, just as we see sensible light in every color, so too we see the light of the agent intellect in every thing that is intelligible—*not, however, according to the ratio of the object but according to the ratio of the knowing medium*."[246]

Nevertheless, being unveils itself as light in the intellectus agens: "Active power is *not contrary to act*, but is founded upon it, for everything acts according as it is actual."[247] But if intellectus agens is that *quo est omnia facere*, then it is precisely esse that reveals itself in it as actus actuum. Thus Albert the Great says, "The active intellect is the part of the soul that *flows from that by which a thing is, or act* … the *possible intellect* … *flows from the thing that is, or potency*."[248] Just as potency proceeds from act and act affirms and establishes itself in, with, and through potency, and thus comes to decision "through" being's movement of finitization in the sense of a primal division of being/judgment of existence, so too the intellect capax entis unfolds itself as "act" and "potentiality," which are in a paradigmatic sense convertible with each other. Since the intellectus possibilis is receptive as "nothing," since it is *capax finiti et infiniti*, it is a receptive ground that can take things into itself. "Now, the possible intellect, since it is a passive power in some sense, has its proper corresponding agent, namely, the agent intellect which is related to the possible intellect as light is to sight."[249] But "a passive potency is only a potency in regard to those things that are within the power of its proper active principle; for, to every passive potency in nature there corresponds an active potency."[250]

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[246] 1 *Sent.* 3.4.5.

[247] *ST* 1.25.1.1.

[248] Cited by G. Siewerth, "Die Apriorität der menschlichen Erkenntnis nach Thomas von Aquin," in *Symposion* (Freiburg: Karl Alber, 1949), 106; Albertus Magnus, *S. de creat.* II, qu.55, a.4, p.1; cf. also a.6.

Because the active potency is not separated in opposition to act, we can say that the intellectus agens acts in the light of being! But if there is nothing external to being apart from non ens, then the intellectus possibilis as a faculty must in a certain sense be "nothing," insofar as the "proper active principle" in relation to which it is potency is "everything."[251]

Just as the essences, nevertheless, do not receive being as an "other," as "something" or an (entitatively structured) "part," but rather originate from being and are always already posited in unity with it (as positive reality), so too is the intellectus possibilis open only for the species that proceed from the light of being, and as such in a certain sense have always already been made intelligible "beforehand": "So, the possible intellect is only in potency to those intelligible objects which are made by the agent intellect."[252]

If the power of the light of being is able to effect "everything," but the receptive intellect is able to become "everything," then both are related to *the same thing*—namely, to being in its superessentiality—insofar as it is concretely "itself" by virtue of the enactment of the movement of finitization. Effective and receptive intellects are able to relate to the "*same thing*"—the one as an active potency, the other as a passive potency—only because reason as such is determined from out of the self-exchange of being and "nothing" in the crisis, that is, from out of the *superessentiality of being*: "The possible intellect is the capacity to become all things, while the agent intellect is the capacity to make all things; so, each potency *is understood to be referred to the same thing, but one is active and the other passive*."[253]

The impossibility of the intellectus agens illuminating the receptive intellect in an immediate sense is a sign of the decision of the circumincession of being and "nothing" that has always already been made, on the basis of which human reason, as spirit *in the world*, embraces and affirms itself. The relation to "the same," which we spoke about above, is therefore not explicitly

[249] *SCG* 3.45.
[250] *SCG* 3.45.
[251] *SCG* 3.45.
[252] *SCG* 3.45.
[253] *SCG* 3.45.

ordered to being in ideality, but rather to being insofar as it is always already concretely subsisting material *ens*, by virtue of the movement of finitization.

The proper undergoing of being's movement of finitization, whose focal point is man, comes to expression in the fact that the intellect enters into its perception and so comes to itself in the dimension of the senses. But it would fall prisoner to the sensible data if it, as intellectus capax entis, did not reveal itself in its capacity for being, which is represented by active potency as intellectus agens, just as being would fall prisoner to the positive reality if thinking were to absolutize the "nothing," which would cause the *completum et simplex* to founder in the res.

The necessity of being thus unveils itself in the active intellect's light of being, insofar as this reveals that being's "coming to itself" is not a collapse into the posited sensible reality. While it is true that being results from the principles of the essence, this is precisely what proves its superessentiality! Therefore even the intellectus agens can never bring the essence of the entity to light as "a whole," since this would imply the deduction of the essence from the hypostasis of being and being's exinanitio would be negated by just this essence in the incalculable historicity of finitude.

Without the intellectus agens, which casts the light of being on the material reality and so "illuminates" it, receptive reason would fall prey completely to what is sensibly given; indeed, it would become itself sensibility. Whenever being as *completum et simplex* is sacrificed to the "nothing," to the *non subsistens*, reason founders in sensibility.

But if, by contrast, being's nonsubsistence were indifferentiated and the simplicity of being were overemphasized in a speculative way, then the intellectus agens would illuminate the intellectus possibilis in an immediate way, all the known essential forms would be actualized at once, and the intellect would have negated the necessity of its being in via. But this became apparent to us in the preceding section as the dissolution of reason in understanding and the foundering of the crisis of being in a neutralized reality of a state of being that is merely "a thing of the past."

The intellectus agens lightens and empowers the sensibly given entity to give itself to perceptive reason and to fulfill it in its non-essentielly fixed potentiality.

"Nothing is understood except insofar as it is illuminated by the light of the agent intellect and received in the possible intellect."[254]

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[254] 1 *Sent.* 3.4.5.

"In" the agent intellect's light of being, which "is always in act,"[255] human reason's status as a lower level of being becomes evident insofar as it must release sensibility from itself in order to achieve apprehension. But just as allowing sensibility to proceed from itself made evident that man is given the task of being the focal point of being's movement of finitization in a manner that exceeds our ability to grasp it and, in a paradigmatic way, the focal point of being's superessentiality, so too the necessary sense of being—being's not clinging to itself (in resistance to its transnihilation) or its exinanitio—reveals itself in a new depth in the intellectus agens, which shines into the sensibly given and does not immediately illuminate the intellectus possibilis. Love sustains the self-exchange of being and "nothing." It does *not* open the spirit, which is capax *entis*, directly to *being* as being, but rather gives the spirit the ability to see through man's bodily eyes. The "nothing" of the intellectus possibilis exchanges itself for the act (the "being" of potentia activa: intellectus agens).

The necessary sense of being becomes determinative in an abyssal way in this circumincession. It orders being—*not* "against" being's original intention—into finitude and brings to the fore the "ultimate," nonessential enabling principle, that is, matter.

It is also unveiled in the same way in the relationship between the intellectus possibilis and the intellectus agens, which does not come about in the zone of the indifferent ideality of being "as such" but can only ever be enacted in the dimension of the finitude of the positive, posited sensible reality. Thus the will, which perfects itself in love, originally co-decides along with the active and receptive intellect, and generates as the spirit's power to let be, which aims at the good in things! Love makes evident that being does not mediate itself to subsistence exclusively in man, which is what would be presupposed by the immediate shining of the light of being into receptive reason. Reason's perceptive being-in-the-world stands in the judgment of ecstatic love. The intensity of its being-bestowing exuberance arrives, in accordance with the relative superficiality or depth of reason's being gifted by being, from out of the hidden depth of its ground. The inaccessibility of this ground to reason's conceptual grasp has its seal in the "consent-to-be" ["*Seins-Ja*"], that is, in the love that transforms man into the beloved.

The intellectus agens and possibilis therefore belong together from their ontological source, for it is just this source that makes it possible to interpret man as the focal point of being's movement of finitization. Thus Thomas says, "Nor does it follow that there are two distinct acts of understanding in a man, because it is necessary that the activities of both intellects concur to produce one act of understanding."[256] But because "intellectus a quo *homo* est id quod est,"[257] it is therefore not the intellect, but man (!), who knows: "Now it must not be said that the agent intellect understands in isolation from the possible intellect, but that the man understands by means of both."[258]

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[255] *ST* 1.54.1.1. "The active intellect is the same as its act" (though this is not said *per essentiam* but *per concomitantiam*). Cf. *ST* 1–2.50.5.2: "The active intellect is active only, and in no way passive."

G. The Temptation That Besets the Intellectus Apprehensivus in Its Relation to Matter

As "de-essentialized" potentiality, reason has always already reached out toward "more" than just all that is, taken as a whole, since it is awakened and enlightened by *super*essential being. Because finite reason is "nothing" in precisely this sense, and is in a position to take into account its *objectum secundum communem rationem entis*, it finds itself faced with the temptation to use its potentiality as a reproach against all that is and to measure what is against being as being, so that it is now being itself, rather than existing things, that "overpowers" and actualizes reason. But if it gives in to the temptation, the movement of finitization is annulled. Reason, in this case, uses its futile reproach as an instrument of power that is wielded by speculative—that is, "concrete"—thinking, which determines being in mediated subsistence. But there is something still more profound hidden in this!

Because being is superessential, it is not primarily or absolutely related to the "pure essence," but transcends the essence by allowing its outermost "potency-for-concrete-existence" to proceed from it. Matter is thus determined as *potentia pura realis* (nec quid, nec quale, etc.), as the nonessential dimension. In its diffusedness and nothingness, matter is the most profound witness to the non-self-withholding character of being and thus to its self-communication "through" the ontological difference.

Matter is "pure potency" and relates to the exinanitio of being as its nonessential enabling principle. But man faces the abyssal temptation to identify this nonessential enabling principle of being with the de-essentialized "nothingness" of receptive reason, which in its nonessentially determined openness is likewise determined on the basis of superessential being, for, just as all essences proceed from being, and the intellect, as capax entis, is *quodammodo omnia*, so too is matter open to an infinite variety of forms insofar as it is itself *non ens*. Matter's openness is of such a sort, however, *that it is only ever able to receive a single form and is nothing "next to" the actualization through the one form, while receptive reason—if we may put it thus—is even "nothinger" than matter in its nonessential openness toward being, since it is capax entis as finite spirit and thus in a paradigmatic sense "quodammodo omnia."*

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[256] *An.* 4.8.
[257] *Met.* 1.1.2.
[258] *Sp. cr.* 10.15.

We must never forget that we were able to interpret the "space" of materia prima in a speculative way only insofar as we "kept" being as being in crisis and sounded out the enabling principles according to an ever more profound reception of being. If matter, as a "nonessential" dimension, is explicitly set into relief "for itself," it "contradicts" itself in just the same way as does being in the vacillation. But to the extent that reason takes its "emptiness" as the standard by which to measure being, in order to light it up in its self-gift and to make being evident "as love" by its own resources, the human spirit also identifies itself with matter. In a certain sense, it takes over the function of matter, in order to make being (which has always already mediated itself "through" matter to subsistence in finitude in the kenosis in "its other") "explicit" in this mediation. Man loses his faith in being!

Just as materia prima is fulfilled by a form and is "nothing" next to it, so too is reason now fulfilled by the hypostasized and substantialized being as being. But just as the pseudo-hypostasis would have to "terminate" the ever more profound reception of being "by" matter at the limits of the same, since matter's *appetitus* would no longer aim at the anima that has a capacity for *superessential* being, so too would the self-enactment of the "spirit" remain imprisoned within the limits of matter, because the spirit that is identified with the hypostasis of being collapses into the material res. "Spirit" becomes "animal"!

Matter, too, is only ever receptive to a single form and has nothing left over "next to it" in the sense of entitative potentiality, which is why the corporeal form is determined *ad unum*, just like natural life in general. This *determinatio ad unum*, however, is precisely the presumption of being "as such" by reason. We saw earlier that the moment being is substantialized and the contradiction is posited, matter too acquires an entitative character; it is essentialized, which means that being extends itself into the essence.

By virtue of this speculative presupposition, the spirit has already begun to "materialize" itself and matter has begun to become "spirit." As the nonessential dimension of pure potentiality, matter turns into a sphere that is open to everything in pure possibility. But what opens it to all things is the pseudo-subsisting being as such, its activum is the Anti-God (quo est omnia facere), while it becomes the maternal principle. This is an abyssal event! Receptive reason has degenerated into pure sensibility.

Because the formal structures of the movement of finitization always remain, so too must even the pseudo-God be affirmed now by matter. But what "comes to itself" here is achieved only in the dimension of material, organic life, and indeed at its highest level, namely, the animal. As such, the Anti-God places itself on the throne so that it may be adored. But it is not our aim to explore this abyss any further in the present context....

If thinking is identified with being, if the res is posited as absolute and matter is structured "entitatively," then it comes to light as a nonessential "being of pure receptivity," open to an infinite variety of forms. One can then say that matter has "to be" something in order to be able to receive forms. It turns into a "material mass" and no longer "exhausts" itself in a single form, by which it is moved and fueled in the longing for the *ultima forma*, the anima humana, by super*essential* being itself (to which this [!] form is "immediately" related). It is just here that the dynamic of evolution and matter's openness to an infinity of forms, according to the cosmos's "task to be," first comes to light. Matter now becomes instead a "superessential potentiality of spirit" for an infinity of forms, "finite spirit" as the self-communication of the "infinite" Anti-God!

7. Truth and Goodness in the Unfolding of the Transcendentals

A. Intellect and Will in the Transcendental Unfolding of the True and the Good

Thomas overcame the gnostic identification of matter and spirit by always remaining faithful to being's superessentiality. He thus says that *goodness* extends further than *truth*, insofar as truth lies in the intellect (this holds for both God and man) and therefore has its locus in the knowing essence. But the good is simply *in entibus*. Thomas is not being inconsistent here!

To the contrary, this is precisely how he excludes gnosticism, which sees being's "self-adequation" ["*Zusichkommen*"] in the sense of the spirit's "being-at-home-with-itself" in knowledge as beginning already in the material dimension. A decision is made in this realm, just as in the crisis of being, concerning the impossibility of identifying the verum and bonum, since the necessary sense of being cannot be posited as a unity with being in ideality. This is the case because reason is never able to negate the exinanitio of being and substantialize it prior to the transnihilation or bring it into its being-at-home-with-itself. Love, which aims at the good in (!) things, is therefore not the "advocate" of the concretizing, incarnating reason against the understanding that is imprisoned in the abstract concept of being.

Because the good lies in things—not simply in the knowing spiritual essence, that is, but also in rebus materialibus—so too love has always already pronounced its "metaphysical judgment" on the internalizing enactment of the self-communication of the spirit, which enacts being's movement into subsistence as its theme, in its ecstasis toward the good in things. In doing so, it discovers the impossibility of substantializing being in the operatio of reason and affirms being in its superessentiality. Because the bonum is "more extensive" than the verum, man's spirit releases the senses from itself, it comes to itself in "its other," without the being-at-home-with-itself in knowledge being able to take its beginning immediately "in the other" in the sense of univocal identity, that is, without spirit being determined as matter.

By virtue of the bonum, knowledge, as being's being-at-home-with-itself, lies in a state of crisis. If knowledge in the sense of being's being-at-home-with-itself were determined by the negation of the exinanitio (the necessary sense of being, or the bonum), then the bonum would remain identical with the verum, the whole of being would be comprehended in human reflection, man would be nothing more than the crowning of being's being-at-home-with-itself and thus matter would be the beginning of spirit. The will's extro-version would attain the concrete entity in the medium of consciousness in its emergence into self-consciousness, and the intellectus agens would immediately illuminate the intellectus possibilis.

As love, the will, which aims at *the good* in which being's movement of finitization comes to perfection, thus prompts reason's incarnation; in other words, the will moves it to concrete subsistence out of the foregrasp out toward being as being. It moves it to the material res and at the same time into its own bodiliness. The "acceptance" of bodiliness is thus the original witness to the impossibility of hypostasizing being, whereby *every* being is decided concerning God's loving presence to man and to all that exists precisely in the "poverty" of the embodied condition of the *homo viator*.

Let us turn our attention once more to the relationship between the intellect and will! As we do so, we will have to keep in mind that the ontological moment of "ideality" does not designate the explicitness of being in the crisis as such, but rather the manifestness [*Offenbarket*] and the self-display of the concrete, finite entity. Reality is therefore always already the beginning of ideality, without being able to extend or sublimate itself into it. It is the good that decides the crisis of this relationship. Therefore, if the intellect enacts being's movement of finitization, then it does not remain trapped in reality, even though the reality "goes beyond" the "explicitness" of being in the spirit in a certain sense, insofar as what is meant by this is the crisis of being. The intellect thus discloses its "root" originally as it moves toward the good, by which the crisis of being is preserved for the reality. The intellect is therefore "radicalized" in the will, for the will is the faculty for the necessary sense of being, which has its seal in the good. In this sense, the will "springs" from reason. It is "intellectual will" insofar as reason opens the crisis of being and pursues being's movement of finitization beyond the reality and into the bonum.[259] But this is possible only if the will brings to decision the crisis of being opened by the intellect, that is, orders being into its finitude; man thus affirms his finitude and so "co-grounds" the constitution of the entity insofar as he aims at the good.

From this perspective, we have to say that the intellect has its roots in the will, since it can be a faculty for the crisis of being only on the basis of the faculty for the necessary sense of being, which "preserves" the crisis as such; however, in the same way being would never be ordered into finitude, and the good, which corresponds to the will, would never "result" in this act if the crisis of being were not opened by the intellect. Thus Thomas can say: "the intellect understands that the will wills, and the will wills the intellect to understand. In the same way good is contained in truth, inasmuch as it is an understood truth, and truth in good, inasmuch as it is a desired good."[260] "An act of intellect" must therefore also "precede the act of will,"[261] for the intellect presents the end to the will and "discloses" (!) this end to it through the "opening" of the crisis of being.

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[259] Cf. *De ver.* 22.12 and 22.13; we must note that we will misinterpret this reciprocal emergence of intellect from will and vice versa if we lose sight of the fact that the intellect does not aim at the will in such a way that it leaps over the positive reality in the enactment of being's movement of finitization: in this case, the decision of the crisis of being would not come to expression (the positing of the positive reality results in fact precisely from this decision). But this would mean that the necessity of being would validate itself already in the ideal vacillation and not first "through" the essence. Whenever this ideal dimension comes forth explicitly "substantialized" as such, the intellect and will become radicalized in relation to each other.

However, because the necessary sense of being holds sway in the crisis of being, the will, which is the capacity for this sense, possesses the power[262] that originally moves the intellect, insofar as it orders being into finitude and therefore surveys the abyss of the movement of finitization, whose focal point is man.[263] It therefore exercises "sway over all of the powers of the human spirit,"[264] for its object is the good: "bonum autem habet rationem finis." Thus Thomas says, "under the aspect of moving, which belongs to the will by reason of the distinctive characteristic of its object, the will is found to be nobler"![265]

The "freedom all the way to the ground" of the movement of finitization is thus borne in the will, insofar as the will, which has the power of the necessary sense of being, orders being out of the crisis into finitude but nevertheless has "its cause and root in the intellect,"[266] for the intellect opens the crisis of being, "out" of which the will enters into act.

Here is where we find the answer to the question whether the intellect is superior to the will or vice versa, an answer that is derived from a speculative illumination of the basic structure and living root of the spirit. It would be possible, of course, to elaborate this metaphysical structure in greater detail, but we wish now to turn our attention to the verum.

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[260] *ST* 1.82.4.1; cf. also *De ver.* 22.12: "Both the will and the intellect, therefore, reflect upon themselves, upon each other, upon the essence of the soul, and upon all its powers. The intellect understands itself and the will and the essence of the soul and all the soul's powers. Similarly the will wills that it will, that the intellect understand, that the soul be (*vult essentiam animae*)." The whole is presented in the *motus circulans*; *De ver.* 22.12.1: "And so, although the intellect is prior to the will when taken absolutely, it nonetheless becomes posterior to the will by reflection. Thus the will can move the intellect."

[261] *ST* 1–2.4.4.2.

[262] Cf. *De ver.* 22.12.5.

[263] "For the will tends to the final act of the intellect which is happiness. And consequently right inclination of the will is required antecedently for happiness, just as the arrow must take a right course in order to strike the target" (*ST* 1–2.4.4.2). The will orders being, in obedience to the necessary sense of being that has its seal in the bonum, into finitude. But because, as we have repeatedly stressed, being does not come to decision only "on the side of the finite," it follows that the will tends toward the "sublation" of the ontological difference in God *in finalem actum intellectus*: qui est beatitudo. The two "movements" are the same.

[264] 2 *Sent.* 25.1.2.4.

[265] *De ver.* 22.12.5.

[266] *ST* 1–2.17.1.2.

B. Ens et Verum: An Interpretation of Some of the Basic Features of Convertibility

Let us read on in the text of *De veritate* 1.1! Here, we encounter the following: "The soul, however, has both knowing and appetitive powers. *Good* expresses the correspondence of being to the appetitive power, for … the good is 'that which all desire.' *True* expresses the correspondence of being to the knowing power, for all knowing is produced by an assimilation of the knower to the thing known, so that assimilation is said to be the cause of knowledge. Similarly, the sense of sight knows a color by being informed with a species of the color. The first reference of being to the intellect, therefore, consists in its agreement with the intellect. This agreement is called 'the adequation of thing and intellect.' In this adequation is fulfilled the formal constituent of the true, and this is what *the true* adds to being, namely, the conformity or equation of thing and intellect. As we said, the knowledge of a thing is a consequence of this conformity; therefore, it is an effect of truth, even though the fact that the thing is a being is prior to its truth."

Given everything we have already said about the crisis of being and ideality, there is no need to interpret this passage in all its detail.

Thomas rightly says that the correspondence between the ens and the intellectus is called "adaeqatio *rei* et intellectus." This means that the *adaequatio* does not dissolve the finite being or volatilize it in the "conformity to being."[267]

"Adaeqatio *rei* et intellectus" makes evident that the positing of the positive reality remains without being separated from the light of being as a mere inert fact in the entity's mediation in the intellect.

Yet it is also the case that we do not reach being simply by extending the res into ideality as if this latter represented nothing more than the final stage of being's manifestation.

In either case, we would annul the primal division of being/judgment of existence. We must therefore say that the locus of truth is not "in reason's simple apprehension," but rather in its judgment, insofar as this judgment places the crisis beyond the impossibility of a "concept formation" that has been isolated by virtue of the power of the hypostasis of being. Thomas therefore says: "Truth therefore may be in the senses, or in the intellect knowing

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[267] 1 *Sent.* 19.5.1.

'what a thing is,' *as in anything that is true* (*ut in quadam re vera*); yet not as the thing known in the knower, which is implied by the word 'truth'; for the perfection of the intellect is truth as known. *Therefore, properly speaking, truth resides in the intellect composing and dividing; and not in the senses; nor in the intellect knowing 'what a thing is.'*"[268]

But if, as we have seen, it is the word that preserves the primal division of being/judgment of existence, if man keeps watch over the movement of finitization in the word and thus determines himself as the movement's focal point, it follows that he bears witness to his self-actualization in the word, whether he is now acting in the *prima operatio* (simplex apprehensio) or in the *secunda operatio* (the judgment, in which knowledge comes to completion): "It should be noted that our intellectual word ... is that *at which our intellectual operation terminates*. This is the object of understanding, which is called the conception of the intellect—*whether* the conception can be signified by a simple expression, as is true when the intellect forms the quiddities of things, *or whether* it can be signified only by a complex expression, as is true when the intellect composes and divides. Now, for us every object of understanding really proceeds from something else."[269]

Truth therefore stands forth when the intellect *says* (!) what is, or is not, the case. Because the circumincession of being and "nothing" in being's movement of finitization comes to decision in this saying, it follows that truth comes to decision in the word, for being's movement of finitization is most profoundly "sublated" in the word. Thomas therefore says: "For, since the truth of the intellect is 'the adequation of intellect and thing,' inasmuch as the intellect says that what is is and what is not is not, truth belongs to that [!] in the intellect which the intellect says, not to the operation by which it says it."[270]

It is important to note that the adequation of the intellect and the res occurs "inasmuch as the intellect says that what is is and what is not is not."[271] There is in other words no "pure" adequation to the res, no similatio of the thing to being, without being's movement of finitization being carried out "through" it, to which the birth of the word bears witness insofar as the intellect says what is or is not the case.

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[268] *ST* 1.16.2.
[269] *De ver.* 4.2.
[270] *SCG* 1.59.
[271] *SCG* 1.59.

If we were to say that the verum adds to *ens* the *conformitas* or the "adaequatio *rei* (!) et intellectus," then we would have in mind here the enactment of the crisis of being, in which reason stretches itself forth in its perception out "beyond" the positive reality and toward being as being. There is therefore no entity that would be able initially to hold itself back from reason (whether divine or human), in order subsequently to come to its perfection in the verum. Even the "mere" ability to come to adequation with the intellect has its ground in an original *conformation*, for there is no crisis of being, being has no coming-to-be-decisively-undivided-from-itself in its subsistence, if the crisis has not always already been unsealed and opened up by reason: "Every being is called true inasmuch as it is conformed or conformable to intellect. For this reason all who correctly define true put intellect in its definition."[272] What becomes clear here is that reason "opens being up" inside the power of being, and that therefore being itself (ipsum esse *rei*) "*is the cause of the truth* according to which it exists in reason's cognition."[273] "The 'to be' *of the thing* ... causes the truth of the intellect."[274]

The positing of the res never occurs in juxtaposition to the being that causes truth in the intellect! If we failed to grasp this, we would make the following argument: "Both essence and esse are contained in the res. But truth has its ground more originally in the 'to be' of the res than in its essence, and so the verum follows upon the 'to be' of the res. But if it follows upon the 'to be' of the res, then the verum has to be different from 'quod est.' Moreover, ens designates the 'quod est,' and this implies that verum and ens are distinct." The total dissociation of reality and ideality from each other over the course of modern metaphysics has its root in this line of thought. But Thomas responds to this argument thus: "But the name of ens is taken from the act of existence, not from that whose act it is. Hence, the argument does not follow."[275]

This means unequivocally that the ens exceeds the *quod* (!) *est*, and therefore does not coincide with the res.

"And in the very operation by which the intellect receives *the 'to be' of the thing as it is*, through a certain likeness (*similationem*) to it, the relation of adequation comes to completion."[276] The intellect does not elevate the res into the ideal pseudo-vacillation in this *similatio*. The *similatio* occurs in obedience to the necessary sense of being, which has always already ordered being into finitude and "let it be" as positive reality. It is only when we have lost sight of this that ens and verum come apart from one another.

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[272] *De ver.* 21.1.

[273] 1 *Sent.* 19.5.1.

[274] *ST* 1.16.1.3.

[275] *De ver.* 1.1 ad 3 eorum, quae contra obiiciuntur.

But because the *ratio veritatis* comes to completion *in ratione animae*,[277] the intellect encounters the temptation to produce truth ad libitum; in this case, being "inside" and being "outside" the intellect converge into one from the perspective of the intellect because it presumes to apprehend being as being and to determine it in speculation.

But Thomas says, "It remains the case then that there is *always some being* corresponding to a truth, while it need not be the case that there is a being corresponding to it (*sibi*) in something outside the soul, when the ratio of a truth is completed in the ratio of a soul."[278] Because truth comes to completion in the spirit, being "in" the intellect and the being of the thing "outside" of the spirit converge only if the intellect absorbs being as being into itself, in which case truth now comes to completion exclusively *in ratione animae* and so the "goodness ... which is referred to according to *the substantial act of being*"[279] is already positively anticipated in being's ideal dimension!

This is the way that truth exists in the intellect: "As a consequence of the act of the intellect and as known by the intellect."[280] It follows upon the act of reason, insofar as reason *accipit esse rei sicut est*.[281] But in this case, the spirit falls immediately (!) under the necessary power of the sense of being, which orders being into finitude. To say it again, there is no *similatio* of the intellect to esse "as such," except insofar as the intellect immediately casts the veil of the pseudo-hypostasis over being (as its "other"). This is why Aquinas says, "Truth follows the operation of the intellect inasmuch as it belongs to the intellect to *judge* about a thing as it is"![282] The *primal division of being/judgment of existence* therefore comes to decision immediately in the similatio, and this is nothing other than being's movement of finitization toward the res. But being does not founder in this "for the intellect," since the intellect, in its capacity for being, draws its sustenance from the luminous night of the crisis of being.

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[276] 1 *Sent.* 19.5.1.
[277] 1 *Sent.* 19.5.5.1.5.
[278] 1 *Sent.* 19.5.5.1.5.
[279] *De ver.* 21.5.1.
[280] *De ver.* 1.9.
[281] 1 *Sent.* 19.5.1.
[282] *De ver.* 1.9.

The abyssal temptation lies right here. Truth follows upon the operation of the intellect: "secundum quod *iudicium* intellectus est de re, secundum quod est." Here, the iudicium, since it presents itself in the primal division of being/judgment of existence, is related immediately to the positing of the ens, *secundum quod est*, and thus to the positive res. Nevertheless, reason remains open to the crisis of being. It would never be able to achieve knowledge of the relationship of its act to the res if it did not stretch itself out "beforehand" into being as being in its capacity for and apprehension of being.

We thus see how the ontological difference between being and what is comes to light here once again in an original way. This difference is something we must once again undergo in the judgment, while keeping it open at every moment in relation to the other in obedience to the necessary sense of being.

Whoever keeps this in mind will be able to understand the following sentences properly: "Being (*ens*) [!] is not apprehended, unless the ratio of the true follows apprehension of being,"[283] and "Being [!] cannot be known without the true, for it cannot be known unless it agrees with or conforms to intellect."[284]

But at this point someone might ask why it is precisely being that causes truth in the intellect. "It is from the fact that a thing is or is not, that our thought or word is true or false."[285] But doesn't this imply that the truth is "more" in things than in the intellect? Isn't it the being or nonbeing *of the res* that is solely responsible for determining whether what the intellect says (not quo dicit!) is true or false?

We must pay attention to what is occurring in this question! The ens is being detached from the intellect and displaced into the dimension of reality as the "object to which reason conforms itself" ["*richtende Objekt*"]. In this case, truth is nothing more than the agreement of the thing with the intellect, according to the measure of "objective correctness" ["*gegenständlicher Richtigkeit*"].

The truth now lies in the res, insofar as the truth or falsity of discourse is determined exclusively on its basis.

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[283] *ST* 1.16.3.3.

[284] *De ver.* 1.1.3.

[285] *ST* 1.16.1.

But what occurs here is precisely the opposite of what one intended to achieve! At first glance, the displacement of the verum into the res seems to be an "objectification of truth." But the res, as the "object to which reason conforms itself," which reveals *its truth* and thus becomes the "*univocal agens*" in relation to the intellect *that seeks truth*, would inevitably shift back into the subject. The absolutizing of the res results from the substantializing of being in reason!

There is a profound connection between the sequestering of the entity in the dimension of "pure reality" and the displacement of the verum into the finite, isolated res. This is a telling configuration, for it verifies that we cannot separate the isolation of reality from the removal of the ideality (verum) of being into the vacillation! But this in turn implies that the verum gets absorbed by the reality. The exclusive determination of the truth as "objective correctness" ultimately fails to preserve its objectivity; instead, it undermines that objectivity.

But the undermining of objectivity is just what we see in this case, only under a different guise. This is why Thomas offers the following response: "Although the truth of our intellect is caused by the thing, *yet it is not necessary that truth should be there primarily*, any more than that health should be primarily in medicine, rather than in the animal: for the virtue of medicine, and not its health, is the cause of health, for here *the agent is not univocal*. In the same way, *the being of the thing, not its truth, is the cause of truth in the intellect*. Hence the Philosopher says that a thought or a word is true 'from the fact that a thing is, not because a thing is true.'"[286]

Although truth is caused in the intellect by the being of the thing, it nevertheless remains the case that the intelligible form of truth is not found in the thing per prius, for the true, which is indeed in things, "according as they are related to the [divine] intellect as their principle," is not an *agens univocum*.[287]

If it were, then truth would have to establish itself "next to" the positive reality, as we saw before; the intellect would then no longer have to conform itself to the being of the *thing*, and we would be left with the subject-object bifurcation that has been discussed so much lately. Because it is incapable of transcending the positive reality into the crisis of being, reason would also no longer be capable of following the crisis of being in the enactment of the movement of finitization toward the positive res and thus, beyond the res, into the bonum. If one were to say, therefore, that the "verum of the res" caused the "verum in the intellect," one would in that very moment negate reason's access to superessential being.

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[286] *ST* 1.16.1.3.
[287] *ST* 1.16.1.

Medicine is not healthy per prius, but it is only the organism that is healthy. But if we were to go on to say that the "healing agent" (the medicine) caused the health in the organism, it is not because we are identifying the medicine as an agens univocum, nor as an agens aequivocum; instead, we are using the term "health" analogously.

Put into the terms of the verum, this simple analogy reveals an abyssal depth. What becomes evident here is the connection between the verum and the analogy of being. This connection emerges speculatively from being itself, insofar as it exchanges itself for the "nothing" (cf. Part A, chap. IX, this volume). It is precisely for this "crisis" that the intellect is "capax."

If the truth in the thing is identified as *agens univocum*, then it founders in the ontological moment of reality and in that moment becomes an agens aequivocum (*secundum diversas res*). At the same time, the intellect founders in the ratio, and the capacity for the crisis of being is destroyed.

We thus see that the sentence *Verum per prius est in intellectu* discloses the entire dimension of the analogy of being.

We would have to unfold this in greater depth in terms of the relation between reason and the understanding, especially with respect to their relationship to the analogy of being. Then we would have to show what all of this means for the "metaphysics as reenactment" and for the "analogy of error" that is implicit in it.

Because the univocation of being rests on the idea that it is the truth of things, rather than the being of things, that causes the truth in the intellect, this speculative presupposition also diminishes the significance of the intellectus agens. What stands out in this case is more the shining of the "truth" into the spirit in the sense of an *actio univoca*. We also see here how the phenomenon of the univocation of being, "illumination," the overemphasis of the positing of the essence, and the shifting of weight to the ratio and toward the res all imply one another speculatively.

But the verum is not preserved by being opposed to the res; instead, it receives light only from reason's speculative assent to the superessential "to be," which empties itself and pronounces the judgment of its transnihilation in the essence. The necessary sense of being nevertheless opens up the abyss of this transnihilation through to the res and never aims at being in the ideal vacillation. Thus the good extends not only further than the res, but also in an original sense further than the true, and this is precisely what gives the true *its proper metaphysical weight!*

For this reason, Thomas is right to say, "The true, speaking absolutely, is *prior to good*.... [This is so] because the true is *more closely related to being* than is good. For the true *regards being itself simply and immediately* [the crisis of being, which sustains reason!]; while the nature of good *follows being* in so far as being is in some way perfect; for thus it is desirable."[288]

The good as the "telos" of the movement of finitization "follows" from the crisis of being, insofar as this movement comes to decision in the good. The necessary sense of being, and along with it the entire enactment of being's finitization, has its seal in the good. It therefore follows that "Ratio autem boni consequitur esse, secundum quod est aliquo modo perfectum." But this is not (!) said *against* the *ipsum esse* as *perfectio omnium perfectionum*.

The intellect opens up the crisis of being to the will, however, insofar as it commands being into subsistence, lets being "be itself," and so lets it determine the self-finitization, though not in an absolute way, since reason in this case would be positing the hypostasis of being. "Knowledge *naturally* precedes appetite. Hence, since the true regards knowledge, but the good regards the appetite, the *true must be prior* (in idea [*secundum rationem*] [!]) to the good."[289]

Conversely, we would never open up the superessential crisis of being unless it were pervaded by the necessary sense of being! It follows that all verum is originally an *objectum* of the will. "Among things directed to the object of the will are comprised also those that belong to the intellect."[290] Nevertheless, the good is not prius simpliciter, but only "in the order of things desirable."[291] Conversely, "everything is knowable only inasmuch as it is in actuality."[292] But "everything is perfect insofar as it is in actuality," and "everything is good insofar as it is perfect" (*SCG* 3.20): *Bonum dicit rationem perfecti*.[293]

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[288] *ST* 1.16.4.
[289] *ST* 1.16.4.
[290] *ST* 1.16.4.1.
[291] *ST* 1.16.4.1.
[292] *ST* 1.5.2.
[293] Cf. *ST* 1.5.1.

We thus see how originally "determinative" the *per prius* or the *per posterius* is for the speculative significance of the transcendentals in their unfolding! Thomas says, "A thing is prior logically in so far as it is prior to the intellect. Now the intellect apprehends primarily being itself; secondly, it apprehends that it understands being; and thirdly, it apprehends that it desires being. Hence the idea of being is first, that of truth second, and the idea of good third, though good is in things."[294] We have carried out the speculative unfolding in precisely this "sequence." This sequential order is possible because it reveals being's self-finitization. If we therefore take the original standard of being's movement of finitization as the basic structure of the unfolding of the transcendentals, then it becomes evident that the verum is "simpler, more abstract and more absolute than the good"—but also "closer to being." It is crucial that we keep this in mind!

The verum is "*propinquius enti*"[295] because reason draws its sustenance from the crisis of being and originally carries the weight of this crisis. This proximity to the explicitness of being—"the true considers esse ipsum simply and immediately"[296]—however, implies at the same time a "*simplicius quam bonum*," since the good, as the "telos" of the movement of finitization, comes to decision "only" out of the crisis of being insofar as being finitizes itself "through" the essence and is posited with it as positive res. The *verum respicit esse immediate et simpliciter* because the good demonstrates itself as an ontological moment only "after" the "positing" of the positive reality, even though it is what preserves and enables the crisis on the basis of which the reality is understood as what is posited.

For this reason, the true is also "*abstractius bono*," since the good in fact aims at the *subsistere*. It is thus not to be found, for example, "among mathematical objects, which do not subsist."[297] This *abstractius* is thus what tempts thought to hypostasize being. It becomes clear, once again, how the thematic shift from a focus on being to a focus on the mind [*der Seins- in die Geistproblematik*], the isolation of the true as something *abstractius bono*, and the vacillation of being (the pure univocity of being, the mathematizing of thought) all imply each other. Of course, the true is also "more abstract" than the good by virtue of the fact that it "does not entail the ratio of the end, as does the good."[298] But the good possesses the *ratio finis* and is therefore also able to relate itself even to the *non ens* ... "the character of good includes more [aspects] than that of the true."[299]

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[294] *ST* 1.16.4.2.
[295] Cf. *ST* 1.16.4, 1.82.3.
[296] *ST* 1.16.4.
[297] *ST* 1.5.3.4.

As *propinquius enti*, the verum is thus also "*absolutius bono*," for "being is a term used absolutely, while good *also* includes a relation (*in ordine consistit*),"[300] which is why the good extends also to the *non entia* in the mode of causality. The "more abstract" and "more simple" metaphysical structure of the true, however, presents a constant temptation to reason to interpret this immediate relation of being as being to the true, which adds to *ens* the "ratio adaequationis *rei et intellectus*," in the sense of the substantialized vacillation of being in ideality, and thus to drag the necessity of the sense of being into ideality or, what amounts to the same thing, to bring goodness to a halt—not beyond the res, but in the positive reality. In this case, we end up having to face a question that is in fact a pseudo-problem: How can we call the substance good *per essentiam* (on the basis of which the reality—the res—is to be interpreted), without thereby at the same time eliminating the participation in being and so positing the finite as absolute?

c. Ens et Bonum

i. Goodness and the Kenosis of Being

We are now coming to the end of the trial. Our task at this point is once again to say something briefly about the proposition *Ens et bonum convertuntur* according to the parameters of the movement of finitization. After everything we have been able to experience up to now, we may say without exaggeration that Thomas has done justice to the literally unfathomable depth of being's superessentiality and has withstood the temptation to identify the verum and the bonum, that is, to logicize the "spirit."

We did not fail to see that we can interpret the individual moments of the unfolding of the movement of finitization only on the basis of the necessary sense of being, if we wish to avoid having them "collapse" into one another or allowing them to fall prey to an abstractive reasoning.

The necessary sense of being comes to a head in the moment of the good. But the good is prior to being's kenosis and its transnihilation in the crisis. It has the ratio finis: "although the end is first in the intention, it is last in execution."[301] The "intention of being" (speculatively understood!) aims from out of the crisis at being's sameness with itself. This sameness, in the sense of a radical "positivity" ["*Positione*"], is what "guides" the movement of finitization to its end. The decision "for" this decisiveness is impossible without the explicitness of being in the crisis and without the positive positing of reality. In all this, it is crucial that we remain mindful of the fact that the good alone allows us to interpret both the crisis of being and the positive positing of reality in a manner adequate to being. But if the good is "prior" to any kenosis of being, then there is no *exinanitio* in the good in the sense of being's transnihilation. If the good did not "transcend" the kenosis of being, if it lay entirely circumscribed within being's "self-giving," then the "terminus" of being's transnihilation would be the pure, positive reality, into which all of being's necessity would collapse. In this case, being would collapse into the essence! But because the bonum does *not* coincide with the ideality of being, then the movement of finitization or the decision of the crisis of being cannot be exhausted in the dimension of the positive reality (which is intelligible only on the basis of the positing of the essence). The power of bonicity pervades the crisis of being in the same way as it does the positive positing of reality and preserves both as ontological moments (ideality and reality) of the concrete, finite entity. It is only because there is such a thing as the good that does not empty itself that there is the kenosis of being in the crisis, its transnihilation, and the positing of the positive, finite reality, without being's "self-emptying" having to get lost in the reality or be the kenosis of what initially clings to itself!

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[298] *De ver.* 22.1.5.

[299] *De ver.* 21.3.

[300] *SCG* 3.20.

But if the good were nevertheless identical with the kenosis of being, then being would never be able to become a "task" for "itself"; that is, it could never enter into a difference from itself, because it would no longer come about "over against" its transnihilation through the essence as a result of the principles of the essence, and thus the evolution of the cosmos ("from below") toward the "being that is given as a task" would either go astray in the direction of the absolute has-been, or would degenerate into a completely indeterminate process that intends "nothing." In the enactment of the transnihilation, being would have to have "in view," not itself as concrete, finite substance (which grounds in truth the fact that God creates by affirming himself [!]), but only itself in pseudo-subsistence. It is only on the basis of the good, which pervades the finitization of being prior to any kenosis, that the "kenosis" of being is intelligible. (The Holy Spirit does not "empty himself"!)

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[301] *De pot.* 7.2.10.

Even though the good (and the necessary sense of being that is unveiled in it) exceeds the crisis of being (in its convertibility with the "nothing"), it nevertheless does not have its place "next to" this crisis. The necessary sense of being reveals itself in being's kenosis as the gift of love. It bears witness to itself in this gift, insofar as it is the "ether of kenosis," the "life-giving element," and the power that inspires it. It coincides with the crisis of being, so that it "cannot be differentiated from it," even though it remains nonidentical with it. If it were posited next to being in ideality, the necessary sense of being would become effective "in" being itself and would require being to be in subsistence a priori. Once again, the theologoumenon of the negation of negation (*non subsistens*) would be introduced into thinking.

We thus see that we arrive at one and the same result whether we follow one aberrant path or the other. If we identify the necessary sense of being with being's ideality, it results in the pseudo-subsistence of being. But if the necessary sense of being were to have its place "beyond" (in the sense of "next to") being's ideality, then the result is likewise the substantializing *of being*.

Bonum habet rationem finis.[302] Thomas says, "the end *is last* in operation,"[303] and he is right to do so, for the good is the telos of the movement of finitization, in which being affirms itself. But if the *prius in intentione* in the crisis were nevertheless identified with the *postremum in operatione*, in the manner mentioned above, then being would mediate its operatio to itself in the vacillation—against its exinanitio—and therefore would prop itself up as the absolute End. In this case, being would never come to decision in the movement of finitization; it would never in fact enter speculatively onto the "path" (transnihilation) of the movement of finitization. *Precisely because bonitas is prior to any kenosis of being and does not empty itself, it "saves" ["spart"] the entire span of the movement of finitization: it preserves not only being's kenosis in the crisis but also its transnihilation and the positive reality in the abiding "unoriginateness" that characterizes it* in the sense of the persisting "state of existing."

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[302] *ST* 1.5.2.2.

[303] *De pot.* 7.2.10.

ii. Goodness and the "Relation" between Being and Essence

After having once again traced out in broad strokes the inner connections between reality, ideality, and bonicity in terms of the unfolding of the transcendentals, we can now take a further step.

We saw that the true turns out to lie "closer" to being than the good: "The true is more closely related to being than is good. For the true regards being itself simply and immediately; while the nature of good follows being in so far as being is in some way perfect."[304] We have attempted, inside of the movement of finitization, to interpret the good that "follows upon being" on the basis of the telos of being's self-affirmation, while we interpret the true, which designates "being itself simply and immediately," on the basis of the explicitness of being in its crisis.

But at this point what we need to present more profoundly than heretofore is the relationship between being and essence specifically in the light of the good.

Thomas says, "Since being is predicated absolutely and good adds to it the status of a final cause, the *essence of a thing* considered absolutely *suffices for the thing to be called a being on its account, but not thereby to be called good*, just as in the case of the other kinds of causes."[305]

The *ens absolute dicitur* is related to the positive *positing* of the res. But this can be understood only on the basis of the essence in its *unitas per seipsam*, for the positing of the essence, "over against" being, already implies the com-position of being and essence in the moment of the always already persisting reality. "To be" never comes to subsistence through the essence as something posited over against it (as an "other" with respect to this essence): "From the very fact that being is ascribed to a quiddity, not only is the quiddity said to be but also to be created: since before it had being it was nothing."[306]

What thus becomes evident in the positing of the essence—that is, in the positing of the positive reality—is the fact that the finite entity is prior to its *causatum esse*, insofar as it bears in itself the likeness of its origin, the stamp of the uncaused character of being as being, which is what most profoundly illuminates the condition of possibility of its being caused (cf. Part A, chap. VI.2.C, this volume). This is why we are able to speak of *ens absolute*

[304] *ST* 1.16.5.
[305] *De ver.* 21.1.1.
[306] *De pot.* 3.5.2.

dicitur, for "We can find nothing that can be predicated of every being *affirmatively and, at the same time, absolutely*, with the exception of its essence by which the being is said to be."[307] This is what allows Thomas, in the aforementioned sentence, to say, "the essence of a thing considered absolutely suffices for the thing to be called a being on its account." But he continues: "but not thereby to be called good."[308]

While being comes to subsistence "through" the essence, it is nevertheless not simply at the mercy of the essence. Instead, the essence proceeds from being itself, insofar as nothing can be external to being other than nonbeing. But this means that the speculative "step" toward being's sameness with itself in the moment of the good is not due absolutely to the essence, since the essence has its origin in superessential being. The essence is utterly incapable of mediating being to itself without it being revealed therein that the essence has itself come forth from being's superessentiality!

We therefore see that both the absolutizing of the procession of the essence from being (the pseudo-subsistence of being!) and the absolutizing of the positing of the essence in the "unity per seipsam" result from the failure to distinguish the good. In the vacillation of being, in the hypostasized explicitness of being as being, thought sees being as the basic source of all essences, it negates its transnihilation and thus also annuls the bonum. The isolated, "unoriginate" reality, by contrast, keeps the eye fastened onto nothing but being's transnihilation out of the crisis. But in this case thought has to grasp being as "pure mediation" and therefore cannot avoid completely absorbing being into itself and logicizing it.

The "essence of the thing considered absolutely" therefore does not suffice "*for the thing to be called good*," even though it suffices "for the thing to be called a being (*ens*)."

These two things belong together: The essence of the res considered in absolute isolation would not suffice for the entity to be called a being if it were not mediated to itself out of the positing of the positive reality. The positing of the reality, however, is rooted in the crisis of being! This in turn is pervaded by the necessary sense of being, insofar as it reveals that being cannot cling to itself in the ideal vacillation and finitizes itself, that is, is *positive reality*.

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[307] *De ver.* 1.1.

[308] *De ver.* 21.1.1. Cf. on this also *De ver.* 21.5.6: "An essence is denominated good in the same way as it is denominated a being. It is good by participation, then, just as it has existence by participation. Existence and good taken in general are simpler [!] than essence because more general [!], since these are said not only of essence but also of what subsists by reason of the essence and even, too, of accidents [and thus in the self-mediation of the ground of the substance that comes forth by virtue of being!]."

If the *essentia rei absolute considerata* sufficed to be able to call a thing good, then the speculative enactment of being's movement of finitization would have to remain stuck in the positive reality, the crisis of being would not be decided, being would be substantialized, and thus the good would dissolve.

But we can never consider the positing of the essence in itself without our being aware as we do so that precisely this positing has sprung from *being's superessentiality* and therefore, as positing, is not related to a being that lies "*next to*" God, but to being as being, which *is* "nothing"!

We nevertheless run again and again into the great temptation to take the essence in itself, for "the essence of a thing is one of itself, not because of its act of existing; and so it is not one by any participation, though it is a being and good in this way."[309]

iii. Participation in Being and Bonitas per Essentiam

Here, it becomes apparent where in fact the speculative roots of our question lie, which we indicated at the end of the previous section: How can the creature be called good *per essentiam* without eliminating participation? If we call the creature good *per essentiam*, then we absolutize the positing of the essence in its unity per seipsam. Reality thus gets isolated! Because the entity reveals the uncaused character of being as being precisely in its reality, then in the same moment the creature must be identified with God insofar as it is now good in an "ab-solute" way. And this, of course, eliminates the participation in being.

It is right to say, "to be caused does not enter into the ratio of being as such."[310] Precisely "*therefore* is it possible for us to find a being uncaused," which indeed presents the condition of possibility of being caused in general. But if the positive reality, the "*essentia posita*,"[311] is abstracted from being and alienated from its superessential source, then it remains unintelligible "how substances can be good insofar as they exist without being substantial goods." This is how Boethius formulates the question in a letter to the deacon John.[312]

We have nevertheless often seen that, from the perspective of the necessary sense of being that has its seal in the bonum, the procession of the essence from being and the *positing* of the essence are "the same." It is only when we lose sight of being's superessentiality that "contradiction" holds sway here.

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[309] *De ver.* 21.5.8.

[310] *ST* 1.44.1.1.

[311] *De ver.* 21.1.1.

[312] Cited according to the Mandonnet edition (Paris: Lethielleux, 1927), 166, 178*ff.*

It follows that the creature can be called good *per essentiam* without eliminating the participation in being or identifying the creature with God. The positing of the essence, "by virtue of which" the creature is called good, can never be isolated, but rather receives everything that it is from the necessary sense of being, which bears witness to the entity's being caused in the movement of finitization.

We will soon come to see why Thomas is able to say: "Nothing prevents that which is said by participation to be predicated substantially." The essence of the creature (as posited!) is not called *res bona* in the isolated positing as *unitas per seipsam* without the positive reality of the entity (!), which results from the crisis of being, always already having been indicated. The positing of the essence cannot be separated from and set against the crisis of being as "pure mediation"! Thus Thomas says, "when the essence of a creature is given, the thing is not yet called good *except from the relation to God* by reason of which it has the character of a final cause," and then he continues, "*In this sense* it is said that a creature is not good essentially but by participation. For from one point of view this is so inasmuch as the essence itself, in our understanding of it, is considered as *something other* than that relation to God by which it is constituted a final cause and is directed to God as its end."[313]

Because the essence is posited in its *unitas per seipsam* insofar as it mediates being into its concrete subsistence, it is *aliud quid quam habitudo ad Deum*. What is at issue here is a *secundum rationem intelligendi*, which has extraordinarily profound implications, however. The essence is given, it is *essentia posita*, and the sharpness of its positing ought not to be dissolved into the *habitudo ad Deum*, or else we would not be taking seriously the fact that being enters into concrete subsistence "through" the essence, that is, the fact that it does not subsist in the crisis but *is* "nothing"!

But the essence would have to detach the entity from its absolute ground—that is, it would have to eliminate the participation in being—which is "nothing" if the positing did not justify itself in the *habitudo ad Deum*, for what comes to light in this habitudo in particular is that "for the sake of which" the positing is what it is; this means that the positing of the essence stems from the superessentiality of the "to be," which expresses itself in the fact that being cannot cling to itself in the ideal vacillation but subsists "through" the essence, or, in other words, being "hands itself" over in relation to the *ipsum esse subsistens* and so becomes finite. It is for this reason that Thomas says that the essence possesses the *ratio causae finalis* on the basis of its *habitudo ad Deum*. This relation would have to cancel out in a radical way its status as a "pure positing," since such a metaphysical "status" would mean it has absorbed God's highest gift into itself and thus negated the creature's return to God. This is why the following two propositions are not mutually exclusive, namely, that the entities are good *per essentiam* ("predicated substantially") and that they are good "by participation." Thus, Thomas also says in the next line of the text, "But from another point of view a creature can be called *essentially good* inasmuch as the essence of a creature *cannot [!] be found without a relation to God's goodness.*"[314]

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[313] *De ver.* 21.1.1.

In other words, the positing of the essence is a result of being's crisis, the necessary sense of being is the pervasive power of the movement of finitization. Now, because the positing of the essence (of reality) stems from the superessentiality of being in the crisis, in which the necessary sense of being, *which has its seal in the bonum*, holds sway, it follows that the finite entity is also good "*per essentiam*," insofar as being mediates itself "*through*" *the essence*! It is therefore also possible to say, from the perspective of the essence and the positive reality, that the creature is always already just as it is; that is, it is always already good. But this depends on our not detaching the reality in its uncaused character and thus absolutizing it or, in other words, not overemphasizing the positing of the essence and therefore positing the absolute (!) unoriginateness of the reality, that is, our not negating the *habitudo ad Deum*. If we did, we would conceive the creature as absolute goodness.

But the absolutizing of the reality results from the detachment of the essence (as posited in its *unitas per seipsam*). If the positing of the essence is understood on the basis of the necessary sense of being—*non invenitur sine habitudine ad Dei bonitatem*—then the reality too remains open to the good. It is thus that we preserve the original dimension of participation.

There is therefore not the slightest contradiction between saying that the creature is *bona per essentiam* with respect to its substance, and speaking of a *praedicatio per participationem*, insofar as they designate "the same" predicate: in our case, the good.

But there is no way that a ratio imprisoned in the concept of being would ever be able to accept this truth, for such a ratio does not have its roots in the superessentiality of the "to be." Even though the "essentia creaturae non invenitur sine habitudine ad Deum bonitatem,"[315] we must nevertheless keep in mind that "even the relation by which the essence of the thing is referred to God as its source is *distinct from* the essence."[316] Being *is* "nothing" in the crisis and mediates itself "through" the "solidity of the positing" of the essence, for its own sake, since it is not (!) content with any pseudo-subsistence. Being is love! One thus cannot dissolve the positing in its *habitudo ad Deum for the sake of being*, in order thus to "protect" God's status as Creator. The consequence of doing so would be the precise opposite of what was originally intended. This would simply lead to a depotentiating of being!

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[314] *De ver.* 21.1.1.

If we keep all of this in mind, we will understand how significant it is that, in his book *La participation dans la philosophie de S. Thomas d'Aquin*, L.-B. Geiger connects the issues concerning participation with precisely that ground, the speculative depth of which we have sought to fathom in the last chapters of our study.

Specifically, Geiger discusses Boethius's text *De Hebdomadibus*: "Quomodo substantiae in eo quod sunt, bonae sunt, cum non sint substantialia bona" (36). We cannot go into any more detail concerning Boethius's text, but we have good reason to claim that the entire unfolding of participation in Aquinas, as Geiger carries it out, presupposes the speculative dimension that we have expounded over the course of this book. Our discussion connects immediately with Aquinas's teaching on participation as Geiger interprets it. The unity of "participation through composition" and "through similitude" is rooted in the fundamental structure of the primal-ontological-division of the principles. Their seal comes to light in the res that is always already posited to the extent that reality and ideality are preserved on the basis of bonicity.

iv. Being's Superessentiality and the Esse *Praeter* Omnes Res Existentes: Goodness and the Concept of Being

From this perspective, we can take a brief look at a few questions from the commentary *In de Hebdomadibus*. Boethius poses them quite clearly in his letter to the deacon John: "You ask me … in what way substances can be good insofar as they exist without being substantial goods."[317]

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[315] *De ver.* 21.1.1.

[316] *De ver.* 21.5.5.

[317] Cited according to the Mandonnet edition, 166, 178*ff*.

Here we get a direct glimpse of the "contradiction" that we have already set into relief. Either, on the one hand, we ascribe the predicate substantialiter, in which case the good is said of the substance *per seipsam.* But if this is the case, then, in substances, being and the good are the same ... for substances have "id quod sunt" "ex eo quod est esse." Thus the being of substances is good. One can therefore say "*substantialia* bona sunt," for they do not participate in goodness. But this would mean that they are the "subsistent good" itself, that is, God. Or, conversely, we say that they are good *per participationem*, which means they are good *non secundum esse* (for this would in fact imply the identity of esse and bonitas); if they are not good according to being, however, then they cannot in fact be good at all!

From a speculative perspective, however, we see a twofold error at work here: on the one hand, the positing of the essence is taken for its own sake. If substances are good by virtue of their "to be," and if this in turn is always already identical with the essence in the positive reality, then there is apparently no longer any reason to understand why the entity would not be good *in eo quod est* (!), and why the substance would still have to participate in the good! Because the essence with which being is united does not have its unity by virtue of participation, as it does being and the good, here too participation in general is negated in the speculative enactment of the interpretation. We can see the short circuit implicit in this: Being in the crisis is dissolved at the expense of the transnihilation, which entails the absolutizing of reality.

So, if on the other hand one were to say in this context that *substantia bona per participationem*, then "esse non per seipsum: *non in eo quod res est.*" In this case, reality, as positive givenness, once again gets detached from being in the crisis. We simply fail to understand that the positive reality can proceed from the crisis of being as the already posited unity of being and essence without having to leave being in the crisis "behind" in order to isolate the reality from being.

We thus encounter a further short circuit: if the bonum is predicated *per participationem*, then that which is participated no longer has anything to do with the positive reality! But if we nevertheless intend reality in its positivity, then, insofar as we retain the predicate *bonum* at all, it can in turn have its place only within the dimension of reality. In this case, we are once again reduced to absurdity because we are thus identifying the creature with God.

We see that the entire problematic has its roots in being's superessentiality and can be resolved only at this level. Being in the crisis of course does not participate in anything: Only the substance is *proprium susceptivum eius quod est esse*. Thus it is the positive res that participates. But how is it supposed to participate since it "always already is" and reveals precisely the "uncaused" character of being as being, that is, its "not participating"?[318]

It is only if one were to say that being does not participate ("'to be' itself does not yet [!] exist"[319]), but that the finite substance participates in being, and then fix the finite substance in the dimension of reality—or, in other words, it is only if one fails to pass, in the movement into subsistence, beyond the positive reality and into bonitas—that the question arises how the substance, if it is called good *per essentiam* (reality!), could in addition be called good by participation. In this case, the isolated reality cancels out the participation. Here we discover the roots of the difficulty!

The essence (and the reality) no longer holds itself open in this case to the necessary sense of being; it makes itself "ab-solute." But because this coincides with a becoming explicit of the essences in the divine intellect, in relation to which God now begins "to gather himself together" and through which he makes himself necessary by dividing his essence among the possibilia, the same consequence follows from this perspective, namely, the identification of God and the creature.

The detaching of reality (the positing of the essence) from being is already the hypostasizing and essentializing of being itself! It is therefore very significant that both Thomas in his commentary and Boethius in his unfolding of the problem immediately aim at the difference between being and beings, for this difference is what is determinative in the speculative dimension of the unfolding of being. If there is to be any hope of resolving the question, then we must grasp the difference between being and what is or, more precisely, the difference between the crisis of being as being and the positive givenness of the always already persisting reality. But this can occur only on the basis of the superessentiality of the "to be," which determines the positing of the essence.

Thus Thomas says in *In de Hebdom*, chapter 2: "It is evident that what does not yet exist cannot participate in something." Being "is" "not yet," and thus it is also unable to participate. The "not yet" circumscribes the entire span of the movement of finitization. "Hence it follows that participation belongs properly to something *when it already* is." However, the *iam est* does not have its seal in reality; otherwise, participation would once again be canceled out. Therefore the crisis of being in ideality is not annulled by the positive reality, the "relation to its cause ... follows, as a consequence, on what belongs to it by reason of its being ... namely, that it is caused."[320]

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[318] "Because, from the fact that a thing has being by participation, it follows that it is caused by another." *ST* 1.44.1.1.

[319] *In de Hebdom*. cap. 2.

This is why, after the sentence "Consequens est quod participatio convenit alicui cum iam est," he writes, "But that thing is which *receives esse itself*" (but the ipsum esse *is* neither form nor matter: it *is* "nothing"); "What thus remains is that that which is is able to participate in something, but *esse itself is not able to participate in anything*." But Boethius distinguishes himself from Thomas's line of thinking already in his formulation. Boethius says: "There is a difference between 'to be' and that which is. Being is not yet, whereas that which is is and subsists when it has *received the form of being* (*accepta forma essendi*)."

Accepta forma (!) *essendi*! This formulation is extremely significant, for it shows that being has backed into a corner that keeps the movement of finitization from ever getting beyond the positive reality. Being is in a certain sense essentialized, and thus the reality is already singled out for its own sake. Goodness is in this case either banished to the ideal vacillation or absorbed by the reality. The problem "how substances are good in virtue of their being without being substantial goods" arises once again unanswered.[321]

Thomas knows precisely that it is only the necessary sense of being and the superessentiality of the "to be" that can liberate thinking from this dilemma. Being as being may never be substantialized, the reality as given may never be detached, without at the same time annulling being's ratio boni. For this reason, Thomas says, "the good, having the character of an end, cannot be said of a creature unless we presuppose the relation of Creator to creature."[322] This ordo of the Creator to the creature (!) is decided in the crisis of being as being, insofar as being is revealed as "nothing"—that is, as "pure mediation"—and therefore the ordering of the Creator to the creature *is the Creator himself*, even though this does not mean to imply that the creatures are identified with him or that God is determined in some way by the finite.

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[320] *ST* 1.44.1.1.

[321] This is why Geiger says, "The solution that he (Boethius) proposes, however ingenious it may be, remains incomplete, insofar as he does not specify the mode according to which the good, though it is real, is able to be identical to the substance that it qualifies without being confused with it—and ultimately without being confused with the First Good—while on the other hand without being added to it in the way of an accident." *La participation*, 44.

[322] *De ver.* 21.5.

This is what allows Thomas to make this magnificent statement: "Granted, therefore, that a creature *were its own act of being*, as God is, the act of being of the creature *would still not have the character of good* except on the supposition of its relation to its Creator." If the creature were also to be identified with the vacillation of being, it would be absolute pseudo-subsistence, and it would also have arrogated to itself the ratio boni in the crisis of being: It would have lost all ratio boni, since being would negate its transnihilation through the essence a priori, and love would grow cold. Being as love would freeze in the substantiation! The speculative enactment of the movement into subsistence would not reach beyond the absolute collapse of being into the essence. The innermost heart of bonitas would not be attained. But in this case, there would also be no *ordo creaturae ad Creatorem*. The entity as *mere* positive reality, however, implies the *ipsum esse* in pseudo-subsistence. The ratio boni of the creature's relation to the Creator is thus absent in both pure ideality and pure reality.

If God is the final end, then every other end receives its most original foundation in the final end, which is God himself and thus "only in relation to the first cause, because a secondary cause does not influence the effect unless the influence of the first cause is presupposed."[323] Thus if goodness is predicated of the creature, then it is so only given the presupposition of the "relation" of the Creator to the creature, insofar as God is the giver of being!

But we saw that the good is not the *principale nomen* of God absolutely considered (*simpliciter*). It designates God insofar as he is cause. *Esse*, however, *absolute praeintelligitur causae*!

There is therefore an *ordo creatoris ad creaturam*, which is God himself, because God is not exhausted in his being cause.

It follows that causing as the giving of being is always already the "sublation" of the ontological difference in God. In this sense, the creature is called good on the basis of the ordering of the Creator to the creature, without the creature thereby being identified with God. If God were only "cause," then the love of God would have to be identified with the ideality of God that gradually absolutizes itself, and the "Spirit" would be logicized. We thus see here how the abyss of the necessary sense of being, the bonitas divina, may not be falsely (!) identified with ideality even "in God." If bonicity were to slip into ideality, the intellectus divina would be absolutely radicalized in the direction of the voluntas divina; in this case, God would become increasingly explicit as cause and thought would seek to get "beyond" the Creator God and enter into the "desert of the Godhead," in order to attain absolute positivity.

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[323] *De ver*. 21.5.

But if there is no order of the Creator to the creature, an ordo that is God himself, then the creature would also not be able to be called good on the basis of the communication of being.[324] It is thus called good substantialiter on the basis of this "order," but that does not at all mean to say that now being as being in the crisis is identified with the bonum. That would be the case only if God himself had his actuality [*Lebensvollzug*] in the dimension of participation and achieved himself in the movement of finitization. But in this case, the *substantialiter praedicari* of the good would annul the *praedicatio per participationem*, since everything would be dissolved into the absolutized "reality."

Ordo creatoris ad creaturam thus does not mean God's self-dissolution into the ontological vacillation of the ideal horizon; instead, it means the transnihilation of being, which cannot cling to itself "next to" God, the revelation of being as love, the positing of the finite entity. This does not imply any imprisonment of being in the posited reality; to the contrary, it represents the emergence of the good in the finite entity "through participation," through the creature's relation to God. The vacillation of being, and all the essentialized thinking that goes along with it, does not want to perceive this, and is in any event incapable of it! The vacillation of being cancels out all of being's necessity. Thomas therefore says, "Granted, therefore, that a creature were *its own act of being, as God is* [the ontological vacillation of the pseudo-subsistence!], the act of being of the creature would still not have the character of good *except on the supposition of its relation to its Creator; and by that fact*"—because the essence is never posited *outside of* its habitudo ad Deum, wherein the necessary sense of being opens itself up—"*it would still be called good by participation and not absolutely in its essential constitution. But the divine act of being, which has the character of good even if nothing else is presupposed, has this character of itself.*"[325]

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[324] *De ver.* 21.5.

[325] *De ver.* 21.5.

The positing of the essence does not neutralize its *habitudo ad Deum*, since the positing arises from the necessary sense of being. Being is obedient to this sense; it finitizes itself, since being cannot cling to itself in the vacillation. The bonum affirms itself in the res, just as the ens transcends the res only on the basis of the bonum. It is not on the basis of the essence that the entity is called a being, but the ratio boni has its home in being itself, to which the essence also belongs in obedience [*zu-"ge-hört"*]! For this reason, Aquinas says, "A creature is from God not only [!] in its essence but also in *its act of existing, which constitutes the chief characteristic of substantial goodness*; and also in its additional perfections, which constitute its absolute goodness. These *are not the essence of the thing* [because the substance mediates itself to itself in the accidents through the superessential being!]. And furthermore, even the relation by which the essence of the thing is referred to God as its source *is distinct from the essence*."[326]

Here we find the resolution of the dilemma into which thinking falls when it fails to root itself in the superessentiality of the "to be."

"Now, it seems that what is ascribed to an entity insofar as it exists would have to be ascribed to it 'substantialiter.' If one therefore says that created substances are good insofar as *they* are, then one would also necessarily have to claim that they are good by virtue of their essence itself." This is how Thomas formulates the apparent contradiction in the first chapter. But as he has always done, so too here he gives the objection its "shine" by unfolding it and shedding light on its fundamental principles. He continues thus in the third chapter of his Boethius commentary: "In order to understand this question we need to take into consideration that the question takes for granted that *esse per essentiam and esse per participationem are opposed to one another*." Thomas thus formulates the problem on the very same basis that we have sought to illuminate ourselves and says that the opposition between *aliquid esse per essentiam* and *per participationem* would hold "according to *one* particular mode of participation," and in this case the opposition evidently holds: "Namely, according to that mode by which a subject is said to participate in its accidents or matter is said to participate in form—and indeed the accident *lies outside of* the nature of the subject, and the form *lies outside of* the underlying matter." If, therefore, being itself is formulated as "*forma* essendi," then it becomes clear that being is caught in the vacillation, that it is essentialized there and we are no longer able to maintain the positive reality that results from being's transnihilation.

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[326] *De ver.* 21.5.5.

If the positive reality is seen at all from the perspective of this speculative presupposition, it is as the telos of being's movement of finitization, which has lost the bonum and has to dissolve itself in the indifferent reality. If the self-exchange of being and "nothing" is not undergone, then being degenerates into a "form" or a mere "accident" … which means it slips into the *praeter* of the vacillation of being!

But in reality we have to say, "From the fact that the existence of a thing is not called a being because of an esse distinct from itself it does not follow that the substance of the thing is not said to be by an esse which is distinct from it,"[327] which is why Thomas claims: "Much less, then, is esse commune itself something outside all existing things, save only for being in the intellect."[328]

With this, what we worked out earlier receives its proper confirmation: if being is essentialized, and thus established as *praeter res existentes*, then it shifts of its own accord into what is now the "subjective" dimension of reason, it turns into the "concept of being." It is clear how originally the proper understanding of the good keeps thought from conceptualizing being.

A thinking that does not yet accept the transnihilation of being in its crisis in an explicit way and has not yet come to see the convertibility of being and "nothing" in its superessentiality will be unable to unify speculatively the statements *per participationem* and *per essentiam*, insofar as that which is participated will have remained closed up in itself in an essentiell way and will "not yet" have revealed its fullness precisely in the exinanitio.

Thomas says that this is what we find in Plato: "For this is true according to the opinion of Plato, who posited animal, biped, and man as separately existing ideas. But according to the opinion of Aristotle, who posted that man is truly that which is animal, in such a way that the essence of animal does not exist *outside of* the difference of man, there is nothing to prohibit that which is by participation to be predicated substantially."[329]

To the extent that being, as "complete and simple," becomes explicit in ideality, the positive reality opens up into being "as being." But this also raises

[327] *De ver.* 21.5.8.
[328] *SCG* 1.26.
[329] *In de Hebdom.* cap. 3.

the danger of reason's hypostasizing the dimension of *esse completum et simplex* into an ideal vacillation between God and the creature. In this case, the dimension of finitude is simply extended into an intermediate zone, which then has to be placed in turn into the crisis, and this means that its "nonsubsistence" has to be speculatively determined "subsequently." The speculative singling out of the dimension of "simple being" thus continues in the pull of its superessentiality—if one takes seriously the fullness of the *esse completum et simplex*—to the point of disclosing its nonsubsistence. This is the dimension through which the *path* (!) from Plato to Aristotle passes. Being comes to light as superessential in its "nonsubsistence." But if it is seen that being cannot cling to itself in the explicitness of an ideal sphere, then the always already persisting, given, positive, material reality also has to come to light in its metaphysical density. The ideas become incarnate because they are sublated into the superideal, superessential "to be." The positive reality unveils itself as the "beginning of ideality."[330]

Thomas clearly recognized that even Boethius was unable in the end to answer the question that was put to him, for he knows that "Boethius, however, is speaking according to that mode of participation by which a *subject participates its accidents*. And therefore he distinguishes as opposites that which is substantially and that which is predicated by participation, which is evident from the examples he subsequently offers."[331]

One can therefore say that being's movement of finitization does not come to light if being and beings are determined as "form" and "receptive subjects." The thinking that cannot let go of the idea of participatio per compositionem in this sense fails to understand that being is superessential and that, as "ipsum esse *commune*," it is "nothing": "praeter omnes res existentes, nisi in intellectu solum."[332]

The genuine crisis of being, "out of" which being finitizes itself in obedience to the necessary sense of being, has sublated mere participation per

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330. A. Forest can justly claim that Thomas was able to unfold Plato and Aristotle out of an original unity by virtue of the *consideratio ipsius esse universalis*: "Everything occurs as if there were no way to save the Platonic philosophy of participation except within an Aristotelian philosophy of experience and of reality." *La structure métaphysique*, 307. The idea "perfects" itself in the exinanitio of being to the concrete individual subsistence, wherein the abyssal depths of being's goodness come to light as the power of superessentiality: "Ideas are directed to the existence [!] of things. But singulars have acts of existence more truly than universals do, because the latter subsist only in singulars. Therefore, it is more necessary for singulars to have exemplars [*ideam*] [!] than it is for universals." *De ver*. 3.8.

331. *In de Hebdom*. cap. 3.

332. *SCG* 1.26.

compositionem in itself insofar as the composition of being and essence always already "*abides*" ["*west*"] (!) in unity in the positive reality of the given finite entity prior to any movement of finitization. For being is interchangeable with the "nothing," precisely because it is infinite "simple and complete" fullness, which is the foundation for participation *per similitudinem*. This insight is also what allows Thomas to resolve the questions he addresses in his commentary on the *de Hebdomadibus*!

v. Goodness in Being's Speculative Decision for Reality

In *De potentia* 7.2, Aquinas raises the following objection: "That which signifies something as an *effect* should not be ascribed to the first substance which has no beginning. Now *such is existence*, for every being has existence through its essential principles. Therefore it is unfitting to say that God's substance is its own existence."

If being is God's first effect, then this determines being from "the ground up." But in this case, how can one characterize God as the "subsistent being itself," if we say that being is God's first effect? Or, to put it another way, all entities have their being through the principles of their essence. Being results from the principles of essence. But in this case, how is God supposed to be characterized as "subsistent being itself" without at the same time denying his unoriginate nature?

If we pursue the question in terms of our speculative unfolding, then we may formulate it thus: If being is God's first effect, does it follow that God can be characterized as ipsum esse subsistens without transposing his necessity into being itself and thus without God mediating himself to himself in being's movement of finitization, which means that *all being* would have to be said to be created?

How can God be called *ipsum esse subsistens* if *esse* (as the first effect) does not subsist? Does this not imply that God himself is his subsistent "first effect," insofar as being comes to subsistence in the multiplicity of entities? Doesn't the characterization of God as subsistent being itself eliminate his absolute unoriginate positivity? And if being is God's "first effect," how can "to be" result from the principles of essence (*Esse . . . constituitur per principia essentiae*[333])? Does that not mean in turn that the crisis of being is absorbed in the res and that being thus comes to itself absolutely on the basis of the essence? How can being, as the actus essendi, result from the principles of the res, if it is God's "first effect" without this implying that God comes to himself on the basis of the positive, finite reality, as so to speak the "first effect in subsistence"? How can being remain "*pure mediation*" as primus effectus even though it follows from the principles of essence?

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[333] *Met.* 4.2.556 and 558.

It is not difficult to see that what is at stake here is the "crisis of being," which is in danger of being dissolved in the positive reality!

Thomas presents his response quite intuitively in an image. The order of the ends follows the order of effective causes, so that the final end corresponds to the first efficient cause and the subordinate causes have correspondingly subordinate ends. So, for example, if one considers the ruler of a state, the general and the individual soldiers, it becomes clear that the ruler of the state is the first in the order of agents, since it is his command that sends the general into the war. But the soldier is in turn subject to the latter, since he fights according to the general's orders.[334]

The end imposed on the soldiers is to conquer their enemies; this end is ordered in turn to the victory of the army, but this victory is the general's concern, and all of this is ultimately ordered to the welfare of the state or the kingdom, which is the concern of the state leader or king: "*It is therefore necessary that esse* [!], which is the most proper *effect* of the first agent, *hold the place of the ultimate end*." But if being, as God's first and proper effect, is determined as the final end, then this determination seems to place being "next to" God and relate everything, even God himself, to being! We are tempted to believe that both entities and God are subject to "being," which in its pseudo-subsistence has set itself up in the place of the "absolute contradiction." But then how are we still supposed to characterize God as subsistent being itself? So, Thomas continues in another place: "Now *although* the end is first in the intention" (and thus all entities also originally aim at being), "it is last (*postremum*) [!] in execution" (being itself does not operate in the place of the "contradiction," because it *is* "nothing"), "and is the effect of other causes. Therefore created *being*, which is the proper effect *corresponding to the first agent*, is caused from other principles, and yet the first cause of *being* is the first principle of all."[335]

Being is God's proper effect. As such, however, it is infinite actuality in nonsubsistence. This is precisely what is expressed in the phrase "corresponding to the first agent." If being did not "*correspond*" to God in this way, then God would be "fixed" as an infinite, univocal essence that clings to itself. Being as being is "nothing" next to God, precisely because it is the highest likeness of God, the "likeness of divine goodness." Being, as the final end, is the first in intention, but it is "nothing," and this is precisely why it "*first*" "*is*" and results (in the enactment of the movement of finitization) "from the principles of the essence." Thus in the self-actualization of the substance it is at the same time the final end! The first in intention, being as the ultimate and final end, is precisely what makes evident the fact that it *is* "nothing" and thus an effect "of other" principles (*causatur ex aliis principiis*). Being is always already positively given reality *without* having to construct itself on the basis of the essence; otherwise, being would be annulled as absolute end and as what is first in intention. Thus being mediates itself through the essence, without God mediating himself to himself through the onto-logical difference of being, and without his having to acquire the name *Ipsum esse subsistens* from another principle. Therefore Thomas says, "Esse is caused by other principles *even though the one who first causes being is the first principle*."

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[334] *De pot.* 7.2.10.

[335] *De pot.* 7.2.10.

Because being, as the final end, does not gather the entities to itself as a pseudo-hypostasis, it does not founder in the positive reality, and God is not subjected to the essentiell principle of finite reality.

It is only on the basis of the necessary sense of being, which preserves the crisis of being in the circumincession of being and the "nothing," that one is able to sustain the difference between being and what is and to determine speculatively the fact that the first effect does not founder in its being caused "by other principles"; in other words, it is assured that the ontological difference does not get absorbed in the moment of the always already persisting reality. All of this is intelligible only on the basis of the good.

The extremes of deism and pantheism first come into play only when the superessentiality of the "to be" gets lost and being gets logicized in the vacillation. The unoriginate reality of God in its absolute positivity is here dissolved into the "ideality" of God's "first effect," into being as being. God is compelled to identify and substantialize, in and with the vacillation of being, that which proceeds in him through the act of infinite reason—the Eternal Word—because that which proceeds in him according to the act of will—the Holy Spirit—has gotten stuck "next to him" in the ideality of the pseudo-hypostasis. Love here means self-withholding being! The unoriginate Father has been depotentiated. The essences have taken up residence as "realities" in God himself. God is now unable to "return" to himself "through" his essence without generating himself through the finite essences. Only as a "God in process" is he able to say yes to himself and will to be affirmed as love.

In sum, we can therefore say that it is only on the basis of the abyss of the good, at which love aims, that being can be determined as the first effect of God in such a way that God, as Ipsum Esse Subsistens, is not degraded into a *principiatum*.

In *De potentia* 7.2.10, Thomas thus explained that created being is caused by "*other*" principles, even though the one that creates being is the "first principle." Here it becomes clear that being can be properly perceived in a speculative sense only if it is always already interpreted "beforehand" as positive reality (positing). But if the "being-caused-by-other-principles" is not to essentialize being in the dimension of the res, or God's "first effect" is to avoid being hypostasized in the vacillation, then the decision of being as being for subsistence must be rooted in the necessary sense of being, which has its seal in the good.

This sense both opens up ideality to reality and allows ideality to "begin" in the always already actually persisting reality of being: "This same fullness of being is of the very essence of good."[336]

This is precisely what Thomas infers when he explains the sentence *Ipsum esse habet rationem boni* by adding: "Just as it is impossible, then, for anything to be a being which does not have existence, so too it is necessary that every being be *good* by the very fact of its *having existence*."[337] The good is therefore the sustaining center of being's movement of finitization, which circumscribes the participation in being, for "a thing is good so far as it exists (*est ens*); for it is *existence* that makes *all things* actual."[338]

If Thomas had not taken this path, his thinking would have gotten mired in the hypostasis of being, the crisis of the ideality of being would have sealed itself off from the goodness that pervades the necessary sense of being and thus would have eliminated being's exinanitio. But if being is thus determined as substantialized *prima rerum creatarum*, then one can raise the following objection: "It is said that esse is the first of created things." But "the prior is that from which there is a sequence which cannot be reversed. The sequence from being to good therefore cannot be reversed; and so good and being are not interchangeable."[339] With respect to the unfolding of the transcendentals, however, it is not fixed as a hypostasis at the "beginning," but is "said absolutely": *Ens absolute dicitur*, as love, which, because it affirms itself in an absolute way, is also *able to take the finite infinitely seriously*.

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[336] *ST* 1–2.18.1.

[337] *De ver.* 21.2.

[338] *ST* 1.5.1.

We saw earlier that being "said absolutely" comes to light neither in ideality nor in reality, but as transcending both of them in the ontological difference. But this statement would be untenable if being were determined in a false "a priori" in ideality as *prima rerum creatarum*! In this case, one would have to conclude: "Ab ente non convertitur consequentia ad bonum: et ita bonum et ens non convertuntur." Thomas therefore replies, "Being is not called prior to good in the sense of prior employed in the objection, but in another sense, as the *absolute is prior to the relative*."[340] The presentation of the transcendentals, to be sure, occurs according to a particular "sequence," which correspondingly reveals itself in the phases of the movement of finitization, but this is anything but a "sequence" belonging to a pseudo-subsisting being!

vi. The Good as the Completion of the Transcendental Unfolding

The unfolding of the movement of finitization comes to completion in the good.

We interpreted the res, the unum, and the aliquid in relation to reality. This path of thinking then brought us once again into the difference between the positive reality and the crisis of being (in its convertibility with the "nothing"), that is, into the difference between being and the entity. Here, the convenientia of the entities came to expression in relation to the finite human spirit. We thus followed obediently in the train of the matter and sought to interpret man in the unfolding of the transcendentals as the focal point of the movement of finitization in the sense of the *Totum Potestativum*.

Being's movement of finitization now comes to a proper resolution in the good, that is, neither in the ideality of being as being nor in the positive reality. The movement *into subsistence* finds its end in the good: "That goodness which is referred to from the viewpoint of the *substantial act of being* is not the very essence of the thing but is a *participated act of being*."[341] The good passes beyond the "positing of the essence" (reality) and safeguards the crisis for being. Being therefore avoids the trap of pseudo-subsistence, though at the same time the entire weight of the positing of *reality* is retained: "Since, therefore, every *thing*, inasmuch as it is *being and substance* (*ens et substantia*), is a good."[342]

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[339] *De ver.* 21.2.5.

[340] *De ver.* 21.2.5.

The good is the innermost heart of being. If it gets neutralized, then all that is left are fragments of factical reality or "ideal values" within the horizon of the "empty concept of being," in the medium of a reason oblivious of being. The good pervades the "whole" of the being of beings; without the good, the res would have no telos: "whereas a thing is dependent upon its end in its *whole existence*. It is in this that the character of *good* was held to consist."[343]

It is only on the basis of the superessentiality of the "to be"—that is, in this context on the basis of the good—that we can withstand the dangers that arise from the fact that neither the unum in the dimension of reality nor the verum in the dimension of the ideality of being possess the *ratio finis*[344]—in other words, from the fact that the dimension of ideality and the dimension of reality (as such) abstract in a certain sense from the *ratio finis*, and thus are able to lead thought to essentialize being. "The one and the true do not have the character of an end as does good; and so they do not have the character of the appetible either,"[345] whence the thinker is therefore constantly beset by the temptation to negate the movement of finitization, either from the direction of the ideal vacillation of being or from that of the isolated reality.

Because neither the unum nor the verum possesses the *ratio finis*, there is a hidden danger lurking in the overemphasis of reality or ideality that one might emancipate reason in a sense that coincides with an essentializing and conceptualizing of being, which then needs subsequently to be overcome by the function of the "Pneuma" (of love) inside of reason. We have already discussed this matter at length.

Conversely, the proper interpretation of the good draws its sustenance from the speculatively sustained crisis of being in ideality, or the positing of the essence (reality) in "accordance with being"!

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[341] *De ver.* 21.5.1.
[342] *ST* 1–2.8.1.
[343] *De ver.* 21.4.
[344] *De ver.* 22.1.5.
[345] *De ver.* 22.1.5.

It is false to believe that, in order to be able to enact the finitization of being sufficiently radically, one would have to go immediately beyond the moment of positive reality. To the contrary, one cannot "weigh" the "significance" of the positing of reality, the "ground" of the transcendental unfolding, deeply enough for the sake of the good; it becomes evident precisely in this weighing that the reality does not close itself off to the crisis of being, nor does the moment of bonicity hold itself back, which would imply that all of being's necessity would be gathered up into an essentiell sphere and being's superessentiality would be negated. We see how being "plays" in its three moments, insofar as its innermost self comes to expression in them.

Because the speculative interpretation of the transcendentals had its "beginning" in the crisis of being, the necessary "distribution" of the transcendentals in the enactment of the individual phases of the movement of finitization comes about at the same time as its modus of nonbeing, which is sublated in the positivity of being, without being itself somehow having to be affected, determined, or co-constituted by "its" nonbeing. Being can express itself on the basis of its convertibility with the "nothing" in a different way, so that it unveils itself by saying "nothing" "as itself."

We have come to see the possible misunderstandings that can arise from such formulations. It is never said that a nonbeing that is "included" inside of being "beforehand" is more originarily negated in the end that guides the movement into subsistence (bonum) than in the ideality of the verum. If we were to say this, we would simply be opposing being once again a priori to the "nothing" (*non subsistens*), and being would have to "mediate" itself and thus *hand itself over* to the things that are, that is, reveal itself as love through the negation of this "nothing." In this case, the negation of the negation is only *apparently* "achieved" in the good! Being would have always already superseded its self-presentation in the medium of an always self-withholding, persevering "essentiality of being," and not revealed itself "without remainder." For this reason, the convertibility of the transcendentals does not mean: the verum "is the same" as ens, bonum "is the same" as ens, unum "is the same" as bonum, res "is the same" as verum, and so forth. Instead, one ought to say that there is nothing in the *ratio entis* that is not also in the *ratio veri*, and yet there is something in the ratio veri that is not in the ratio entis: "There is a conceptual difference between the true and being since there is something in the notion of the true that is not in the concept of the existing—not in such a way, however, that there is something in the concept of being which is not in the concept of the true."[346] Further on: "Good does not differ from being and the one because *the notions are opposed* but because the notion of good includes those of being and the one and *adds* something to them."[347]

Now, because the transcendentals "convertuntur secundum *substantiam*,"[348] even though they are different *secundum rationem*, their interpretation comes to light also in being's movement *into subsistence*.

But the moment that being gets fixed already in ideality *against* its nonsubsistence (because of thought's fear of a possible dissolution of being's positivity!), the "nothing" itself, as the negation that needs to be negated, acquires a constitutive character for being. At the same time, the essences stand out in the divine intellect, and in their negative mode as "nothing" they become constitutive for God. In this case, we have the "transcendentality of the nothing" that hounds Hegel, the transcendentality that trails being in its self-unfolding. Whoever therefore denies that being exchanges itself in the crisis for the "nothing"—that is, *is* (!) "nothing" next to God—in the same moment undermines God's positivity. But what does this imply?

The convertibility of being and "nothing" "first" comes "to decision" in the course of the movement into subsistence, a decision in which being unveils its proper positivity in the good. It is "here" that the negation of the negation is carried out, that is, that the finite is negated as otherness in God and God himself becomes the "negation of the negation"! Because in this case God has his living actuality in difference, the difference is now "definitively" closed, love has been "revealed," which in turn draws its sustenance from the truth that Thomas has in mind when he says: "But *good does not add to being a negation* but essentially consists in something *positive*."[349] But if the good is "logicized," then being converges with the "nothing" in the vacillation. Thus it is precisely the highest speculative effort and a grappling with the superessentiality of the good that leads us either to posit being in the crisis against its nonsubsistence, in order to preserve its absolutely positive character, or to make this character explicit by having being mediate itself to itself in the movement into subsistence as the negation of the negation (*non subsistens*). In both cases, being is deprived of its potency, for the apparent positivity that is preserved *against* nonsubsistence is already the enfeeblement of being into the "empty concept of being."

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[346] *De ver.* 1.1.6; cf. 1. *Sent.* 19.5.1.

[347] *De ver.* 21.6.2.

[348] 1 *Sent.* 8.1.3; "But the true that is in things is convertible with being as to substance." *ST* 1.16.3.1.

[349] *De ver.* 21.5.7.

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Prospectus

There would be a good deal left to say, but we wish at the end—which is both a coming to rest and a listening [*ein Auf-hören*]—to turn our ears once again back to the Ground [*Grund*] that has spoken in and through everything that has here been said. This Ground is meant to come to expression in a few questions that we deliberately formulate with a certain "trepidation." We saw over and over again that God's self-enactment is undergone in an abyssal way along with being's movement of finitization, and that man, as the concretely subsisting focal point of being's self-finitization, is entrusted with the task of saying "Yes" to the "difference in God."

Is the difference of the movement of finitization, the focal point of which *man* represents, sublated in the "difference of God," in which the absolute positivity of being in its superessentiality is revealed in an unfathomable way? Do the temptations that beset man in the enactment of the participation in being not arise from a decision for or against the life that represents the *absolute Ground* of being's self-finitization? Hasn't this Ground already relieved the *distress* of the ontological vacillation, the logicizing of the Spirit, in the gift of the Word that is adequate to being as being—*through* which everything that is receives its being and comes into existence—and made straight the movement of finitization?

Doesn't this *necessarily*, of course as God's free *gift* but precisely as such, occur along the path of being *in its self-finitizing*, in the revelation *of the Man*, who undergoes in obedience the crisis of being in its convertibility with the "nothing"? If the ontological difference is decided "by" man himself, doesn't this imply that the theme *of the movement of finitization as man's image* lies hidden from all eternity in the absolute difference in God? And because the difference of the movement of finitization stems from the absolute difference in God, then doesn't man, as the theme of the "finite difference," discover himself in the light of *the Man* who *is the theme of the absolute difference in God himself?*

What does ontological spatiotemporality mean *in this context*? How does it present itself in this "*becoming man*"? What in this context does the essence's procession from being mean? What *in this context* does it mean to say that *being affirms itself in the interpretation of man as the focal point of the movement of finitization*? What ultimately does the necessary sense of being mean? How does the "unoriginate" reality reveal itself with respect to the Ground—the reality, that is—that proclaims itself in the always already accomplished perfection of being, the moment of reality that "*never passes away*," that knows *no procession,* and that is always already "prior" to difference?

What does it mean at bottom [*im Grunde*] to say that being empties itself "in obedience" to itself, that it cannot cling to itself in the pseudo-vacillation? What in *this* context (!) does the "necessary sense of being" mean, which has its seal in the good? What does it mean that it knows no "kenosis," just as the good too does not empty itself, but is *diffusivum sui*? Into what does the fullness of bonitas ultimately open itself, the fullness that knows no exinanitio? How does the elimination of the pseudo-vacillation, its transnihilation, come to be *in man's self-outpouring*? How does a new enabling dimension emerge from out of the self-emptying, an *essentiell* dimension that, in obedience to the necessary sense of being, provides the "space" in which the one who empties himself affirms himself, indeed, *remains in being* ... ? How does what we said in the transcendental unfolding of man about the relationship between man and woman, and the way they bring to light the "play" of the principles of being and essence, come to appear in this context?

All these are questions that would have to be more thoroughly explored and more profoundly answered in a continuation of the present work, and they can indeed find an answer.

Whoever is familiar with the dimension that has come "silently" to expression here can appreciate whence all speculative unfolding receives its light, the ground upon which it can come to stand properly on its own. He will see that the transcendental unfolding of man in terms of the participation in being has foundational significance for what one might describe as a *"general" theology* in the "*Spirit of the Word*." The fate of such a theology, I believe, is decided precisely today once again in the undergoing of an inconceivably profound mystery—inconceivable because it has always already been entrusted to us beyond our capacity to contain it in concepts. The present book has sought to take a few modest steps into just this abyss.

ABBREVIATIONS

Summa Theologica	*ST*
Summa contra Gentiles	*SCG*
Quaest. disp. de veritate	*De ver.*
Quaest. disp. de potentia dei	*De pot.*
Quaest. disp. de anima	*An.*
Quaest. disp. de malo	*Ma.*
Quaest. disp. de spiritualis creaturis	*Sp. cr.*
Quodlibeta	*Quodl.*
Compendium Theologiae	*Comp. theol.*
De ente et essentia	*E. E.*
De divinis nominibus	*Div. nom.*
Com. in Libr. Sentent.	*Sent.*
Com. in Libr. Metaph. Arist.	*Met.*
Com. in Libr. Phys. Arist.	*Phys.*
Com. in Libr. de anima Arist.	*In An.*
Exp. super Boethii de Trinitate	*In de Trinit.*
Com. in de Hebdomadibus	*In de Hebdom.*
Exp. super librum de Causis	*In de Causis*

LEXICON

Please note: The meaning of fundamental philosophical terms can never be adequately given in a simple definition, in abstraction from all context. The following exposition of terms is meant principally as a heuristic device, both to indicate the original German terms behind the English translations, and more generally to offer the reader initial help with the text, in which the terms and phrases will take on a richer sense and receive the proper qualifications.

A = A A symbol for purely formal, abstract identity (as opposed to "sameness," which has a concrete character); identity that excludes otherness. *See "sameness"*

absolute system (*das absolute System*) The ideal sought by a certain strain of philosophy, characteristic of the modern metaphysics that reaches its culminating point in Hegel's thought; the absolute system would deduce all its claims from a set of premises that can themselves be justified in turn by what follows from them; thus a self-enclosed philosophy.

analogia proportionalitatis and analogia attributionis Two of the types of analogy described by Aquinas: the "analogy of attribution" is a comparison of two things that share a similar attribute (A is like B in that they both share the attribute C, though they express the trait differently); the "analogy of proportionality" is a comparison between two relations; for example, vision is analogous to understanding because the relationship of visible objects to seeing is similar to the relationship of intelligible objects to knowing.

anthropological reduction (*die anthropologische Reduktion*) The *leading* (*ducere*) of all things *back* (*re-*) to man, as the paradigmatic expression of the being that all things share. This "re-ductio" is meant positively, and ought to be distinguished, for example, from the sort of "anthropological reduction" that Hans Urs von Balthasar criticizes in *Love Alone Is Credible. See "guiding pattern"*

ad-vent (*die Zu-kunft*) The "futural" dimension of being; a Latin translation of the German *Zu-kunft*, that which "comes toward" (*zu-kommt*); generally related to the *esse*, the "to be," of things (or "ideality"), in contradistinction to their essence (or "reality"), which has a particular connection to the past, and to their "being present" ("bonicity"). When the future is isolated from the past in the elimination of the goodness of the present, it fragments into an endlessly deferred "yet-to-come." *See "essential past," "being present," and "ontological spatiotemporality"*

anti-space and anti-time (*Wider-raum und Wider-zeit*) The character that "ontological spatiotemporality" acquires when the "necessary sense of being" is betrayed, and the principles of being are thus fragmented and either turned against each other or collapsed into each other. *See "ontological spatiotemporality"*

the "beginning" (*der "Anfang"*) The term is often presented with scare quotes, in order to make clear that there can be no absolute—presuppositionless—starting point for thought. In modern metaphysics, one nevertheless finds an attempt to secure such a point in order to philosophize in what one takes to be a properly critical manner, which inevitably *fixes* being as a thing in itself. There is, of course, also a positive sense of beginning, as the novelty of esse and of childhood, among other things (consider, e.g., Ulrich's *Der Mensch als Anfang*). *See "hypostasis" and "contradiction"*

being present (*ontologische Gegen-wart*) Etymologically, *Gegenwart* means "turning toward" (*warten*, which is related to the Latin *vertere*, and *gegen*, meaning in this case "toward," "facing"). The term here indicates the dimension of "ontological spatiotemporality" related to things in their "goodness" or "bonicity"—that is, in their concrete subsistence—*der Gegen-wart* is the proper unity in distinction of pastness and futurity (as the fruit of the recollected past and as open to what approaches from the future, which it in some sense presupposes) and represents the perfection of freedom. *See "ontological spatiotemporality," "ad-vent," "essential past"*

bonicity (*die Bonität*) "Goodness" in the technical sense of an "ontological moment" (*Bonität* is a term coined in analogy to *Idealität* and *Realität*). This moment represents the culmination of the creative act of God in which things fruitfully participate through their actually subsisting. Aquinas (*ST* 1.5.1ad1) distinguishes between goodness in a relative sense (*secundum quid*) and in an absolute sense (*simpliciter*); this latter indicates the creature in its second actuality, or its proper subsistence in and through its accidents. The absolute sense has its paradigm in human freedom, man's actual being good in his acts of knowing and willing, in his word and his love. As an ontological moment, "bonicity" thus refers to the perfection of being in love, and as such reveals the unity of reality and ideality, insofar as subsistence is the (real) substance's enactment of its esse (ideality), the thing's concrete openness to, and in, the mystery of being. When Ulrich says that creation "means," or "aims at" (*meint*), *man*, he has in mind the love in which the movement of being reaches the destination God intended from the beginning (*bonum* has the *ratio finis*). *See "ideality," "reality," "ontological moments," and "necessary sense of being"*

cleared/spaced (*geräumt*) The German word *geräumt* generally means "cleared out" or "vacated," but Ulrich plays here on the connotation with the word *Raum*, meaning "space." Being "clears itself out" (*räumt sich aus*) to make room for the essence, which in turn provides the space (*Raum*) for being's arrival, by "permitting" (*einräumen*) it to be the being of this particular entity. The essence thus "limits, contains, and constricts" the infinite act of being; as that "through" which esse comes to subsistence, it presents the ontological principle of space. *See "ontological spatiotemporality" and "generated/temporalized"*

clinging-to-itself (*an-sich-halten*) Being's resistance to the *exinanitio* entailed by its "necessary sense," its "movement of finitization," or "movement into subsistence." *See "hypostasization" and "crisis of being"*

contradiction (*der Widerspruch*) In the context of the speculative unfolding, this refers to the result of being's "clinging-to-itself," which both sets it over against "nothing" and also identifies being with it. Thus there is a "Yes and No" at once. In the contradiction, being and "nothing" no longer properly mean the "same" but can relate only dialectically, that is, simultaneously excluding and depending on each other. The simultaneous opposition between being and nothing and their identification can thus be resolved inside of the speculative project of "self-creation" only through dialectical reason, which means that logic substitutes for love. *See "convertibility of being and 'nothing'"*

convertibility of being and "nothing" (*die selbige Verwendung von Sein und "Nichts"*) Also translated as "circumincession," "interchangeability," the "exchange" or "self-exchange" of being and "nothing." Heidegger observes that "being and nothing" do not stand over-against each other, but each "employs itself for the other in a kinship whose essential fullness we have yet scarcely pondered" ("Question of Being," 317). Ulrich reads this observation as a way of interpreting esse as *completum et simplex sed non subsistens*, and emphasizes even more radically than Heidegger the fact that the "nothing" is not imposed on being from the outside, so to speak, but is in a profound way "the same" ("*selbig*"). This is not to say that they are "con-fused" in an abstract identity. Instead, each is a way of expressing the profound mystery of being, its pure positivity. It is important to note that "convertibility" here is not meant in a merely semantic way, which would make the two terms coincide only *per accidens*. It is rather the case that each brings out the deepest meaning of the other (without there being a simple symmetry between the terms). The coincidence of being and "nothing" is an essential expression of being's superessentiality.

crisis of being (*die Krisis des Seins*) The decisiveness of being (from the Greek *krinein*, to judge or decide), in contrast to a univocal concept of being, which would posit it as essentially indifferent, prior to the difference between infinite being and finite being; esse always already is *either* God, *or* the being of creatures. *See "indifferentiating," "vacillation," "contradiction"*

depotentiation (*die Depotenzierung*) Also translated as "enfeeblement." This is a way of expressing the weakening of being, typically through the reduction of actuality to a potency that is affected by what lies outside of itself and so dependent on this extraneous principle or element to become what it most properly is; used in reference to being (which is treated as dependent on essence) or to God the Father (who is treated as extrinsically dependent on the Son or more generally on the finite). The word also commonly indicates an "impotence" as the inability to give or to generate.

distress (of the contradiction) (*die Not*) The need (*die Not*) generated by the contradiction of the hypostasizing of created esse, which is "relieved" (already in advance) by the "movement into subsistence." *See "need-relieving"*

ens The entity, the existing thing, the being, specifically in relation to esse, and hence to subsistence (as opposed to the *res*, which is the thing in relation to essence). As Aquinas says, "ens is said to be, in a way, that which has esse; and this refers exclusively to the substance that subsists" (*In Meta.* XII, lec. 1, 2419). *See "res"*

entitative When used in relation to matter, the term refers to an interpretation of matter, not as potency wholly relative to the actuality of either form or esse, but as having a certain ontological status already in itself, apart from those actualizing principles; such an interpretation can be found in different forms in Scotus and Suarez. *See "potency for concrete existence"*

Er-eignis The usual German word for "event." In *Homo Abyssus* the term (which sometimes appears hyphenated in order to bring out its etymology) is borrowed from Heidegger, who uses it to refer to the "belonging together" of being and man, through which each "comes into his own" (*eigen* means "own") even as each is "appropriated to" (*übereignet*) the other; typically used above all to indicate being's historical arrival at self-identity in subsistence, and so most properly in man's personal reception.

esse Latin infinitive, "to be." In general, what Aquinas specifically has in mind when using the word in a metaphysical context is the *actus essendi*, the act of being, which he says is the "actuality of all acts" and the "perfection of all perfections." There is a distinction—but also an analogy—between Ipsum Esse Subsistens (God, who is subsistent being itself), and esse creatum, or created being, which is *completum et simplex, sed non subsistens*, and subsists only in creatures. To reflect on the abundant paradoxes implied in Aquinas's conception of being is one of the principal tasks of *Homo Abyssus*.

essential past (*das Ge-wesen*) The German past participle of "to be" is *gewesen*, which forms the root of the word Ulrich uses in this ontological context for the "past," *die Gewesenheit*, or "having-been-ness" (the usual German word for the past is *die Vergangenheit*); *Gewesenheit* lends itself to this ontological usage because it includes *Wesen*, the German word for "essence." Particularly when hyphenated (*ge-wesen* or *Ge-wesenheit*), the word is meant to indicate both the essence and the past at once. As Hegel puts it, "essence" indicates the past, but specifically "the timeless past." It should be noted that the connection between the past and the essence of things also appears in the phrase Aristotle coins to express the essence of things: τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι (*quid quod erat esse*), what-it-*was*-to-be. *See "ontological spatiotemporality," "being present," and "ad-vent"*

essentiell (*essentiell*) There are two words in German for the adjective "essential" or the adverb "essentially": *wesentlich* is the common term, with a sense as broad as the English equivalent; *essentiell*, derived from the Latin noun *essentia*, is a more technical philosophical term referring specifically to the order of essence.

exinanitio (or kenosis) (*die Exinanitio*) *Exinanitio* is the Latin, *kenosis* the Greek, for "emptying," "evacuating," or "exhausting." Cf. Phil 2:6*ff.*, in which St. Paul describes the Son's self-emptying in the incarnation. Ulrich's use of the word in the ontological context makes implicit reference to this passage.

extro-version/intro-version (exitus/reditus) (*Aus-kehr/Ein-kehr*) A turning (*Kehre*, versio) outward ("extro-") or inward ("intro-"); typically used in relation to the human soul, which moves "outward" into the world in its operations (the "outermost" of which is the sensible apprehension of material being), while simultaneously returning completely to itself by virtue of its spiritual nature (reditio in seipsam). The "movement inward" includes the intellect's attainment of the inner essence of things beyond the external accidents (intelligere as *intus* + *legere*). *Einkehr* also means, more generally, a retreat, a recollection, an act of contemplation. More generally, the simultaneous movement out and in characterizes the act of subsistence, as well as the movement of being in creation. In their subsisting, things internalize themselves in their outward expression, which is to say that substances both arrive at and disclose their in-itself being in their accidents. The play of this "exitus and reditus" is the expression of the act of being in concrete subsistence.

facticity (*die Faktizität*) The "brute factuality" of concrete existence, in contrast to its ideality or intelligibility, which thus resists explanation.

foregrasp (out into being) (*der Vorgriff*) A conceiving of being that has always already occurred, insofar as the human spirit is at all only insofar as it subsists. The word is borrowed ultimately from Heidegger, who used *Vorgriff* in *Being and Time* to designate our spontaneous, though provisional, preconception of things that guides our interpretation, and then qualified the term in his book *What Is a Thing?* by saying that the *Vorgriff* "reaches out beyond the thing and at the same time reaches back behind us ourselves. The grasping-forwards is a grasping-backwards." For Ulrich, similarly, the term indicates the intellect's always already being with, or "apprehending," being in each of its acts. Reason, as intellectus, does not begin, as it were, "outside" of being, which would then represent its "other" in an oppositional sense, but is always already involved in being; specifically, it *is* as "ecstatically" stretched out into being, which nevertheless always remains "superior" to it. In other words, the "foregrasp" does not imply an a priori concept or category in the Kantian sense. Karl Rahner, who is most commonly associated with the term (cf. his *Spirit in the World*), uses it essentially in this Kantian sense, which represents, for Ulrich, a falling to the temptation of reducing the "always-already-ness" of the grasp of being to a definitive achievement or "thing-of-the-past." *See "intellectus capax entis"*

freedom open all the way to the ground (*Freiheit-zum-Grunde*) A phrase that Heidegger coined (see his "On the Essence of Ground") to indicate the openness of human being that precedes and makes possible the logical principles (*Gründe*) by which things are explained and justified. In HA, it refers to man's original participation in being, which necessarily involves his co-determining, his positing the unity, of the world and God simultaneously with his enacting his own.

"fullness of time" (*die "Fülle der Zeit"*) The event of the Incarnation, which is also a revelation of the superessentiality of being and the fullness of ontological spatiotemporality.

generate/temporalize (*zeitigen*) The German verb means "to produce" or "to yield"; it is etymologically related to the word *Zeit*, that is, "time" (the root means "to proceed" or "come forth"). In the metaphysical context of *Homo Abyssus*, *zeitigen* indicates a "bringing about," which at the same time establishes ontological spatiotemporality.

Geschick (or the "self-sending" of being) A term Heidegger appropriates to mean the particular, characteristic way that being reveals itself (or "sends" itself: *schicken*) in a given age or epoch in history (*Geschichte*). This revelation is a "destiny" (*Schicksal*).

gift/task of being (*die Auf-Gabe*) Being is a gift (*Gabe*), but one that must be realized as a task (*Aufgabe*). In making itself a gift, being lets itself go, or gives itself up (*sich aufgeben*), and so approaches itself as something to which it aspires (*auf sich sein*). The hyphenated word *Auf-Gabe* is meant to signal all three of these dimensions at once.

guiding pattern (*die "Richte"*) The German word is used, **among other things**, to indicate the measure, rule, or guide line one uses to straighten things out, to set them straight (*in die Richte setzen*). In HA, we translate the word sometimes thus, sometimes as "normative pattern," "governing paradigm," or "blueprint," and sometimes in the verbal sense of "giving direction to," to emphasize the quality of enactment. Ulrich ascribes the term to man on account of what he sees as man's representative function in the order of creation, that is, the fact that man's particular way of being—his unifying of spirit and matter, his capacity to receive his being in explicit gratitude and to *embody* that gratitude, his *essential* living out of being's *superessentiality*, and his expression of the "yes" to being in his dialogical relations with others—both provides the model that all other beings in the cosmos strive after and, properly enacted, effects the ordering of things by creatively affirming them in their truth and goodness.

hypostasization (*die Hypostasierung*) Though it is *completum et simplex*, created esse does not subsist as such, but only *in* particular things. Nevertheless, the intellect remains beset by the temptation to separate it from beings and thereby turn it into a thing that subsists in itself, thus "hypostasizing" it, typically by *opposing* it to the "nothing." *See "convertibility of being and 'nothing'"*

ideal vacillation (*ideale Schwebe*) Created being does not exist apart from existing things *nisi in intellectu solum*, "except in the intellect alone" (*SCG* 1.26.5); if being is thus separated as its own reality, so to speak, and so "suspended" in itself, it is at the same time absorbed into the intellect or in the subject; the hypostasizing of being and the reduction of being to ideality occur simultaneously. *See "vacillation of being"*

ideality (*Idealität*) "By 'ideality,' we mean being in its as-ness (*Alshaftigkeit*) or being in its explicitness as being" (*Sein und Wesen*, 46n16). Ideality indicates being as manifest to the intellect, whether God's or man's. The particular sense of the term depends on context: most fundamentally, since God knows all things in knowing himself, being is "archetypically" identical with God, who is Esse itself; ideality, in this case, means esse as *praehabens omnia subsequentia*, and so refers to being as the "perfection of all perfections" and "actuality of all acts." In another respect, the ontological moment of ideality refers to the esse of things, as distinct from reality (which refers to things in relation to their posited essence: *res*) and bonicity (which refers to things in their concrete subsistence: *ens*), insofar as the distinctness of esse from existing things is manifest only to reason (as mentioned in the entry above, there is no "esse commune ... except in the intellect alone"). In general, "ideality" indicates the wealth of being, its radiant fullness, its simplicity and completeness, and its "light." *See "reality," "bonicity," and "ontological moments"*

indifferentiating (*die Indifferenzierung*) The "dulling," so to speak, of being's crisis—that is, its decisiveness—and so the neutralizing of the "necessary sense of being." *See "crisis of being," "necessary sense of being"*

intellectus agens and intellectus possibilis The "active intellect" indicates reason's capacity to abstract the intelligible—that is, universal—essence from the sensible species of things (the intellect is *quo est omnia facere*, that by which all things are made [intelligible]), while the "possible" or "passive" intellect indicates reason in its capacity to receive the intelligible species into itself as that whereby it knows a given reality (the intellect is *quo est omnia fieri*, that which becomes all things). *See "luminous night"*

intellectus capax entis (*die "seinsvernehmende" Vernunft*) The German phrase literally means "reason, which perceives or apprehends being" (Aquinas characterizes the intellect as *apprehensivus entis*). The Latin phrase *intellectus capax entis* is intended to indicate reason's "capacity for being" or, in other words, its fundamental, constitutive relatedness to, or aptness for, being. Reason (*intellectus*) and being are essentially correlative. *See "fore-grasp"*

in via (***unterwegs***) A "shorthand" way of indicating man's distinctive finite condition; the term refers to the soul's embodied character, reason's essential connection to sensibility, and the intellect's discursivity, that is, its activity as "ratio" (instead of knowing things through immediate intuition, as do the angels, human knowledge requires, though is never reduced to, the following of a discursive "path" [*Weg*]). More generally—and theologically—the phrase refers to man's "wayfaring" condition on this earth, "prior" to the eschaton.

listening obedience (***die Hörigkeit***) Reason's proper responsiveness to the "necessary sense of being," which it in any event cannot evade. The German word *die Hörigkeit* normally means "bondage." In HA, however, Ulrich does not intend the term in any negative sense; instead, he uses this term rather than the usual one for obedience (*der Gehorsam*) in order to emphasize reason's radical dependence on being in its proper sense, but also to strike the particular note of "listening" or "hearing" (*das Hören*).

the "little way" (***der "kleine Weg"***) A term that characterizes the humility of man's finite, embodied condition (*in via*)—reason's dependence on the senses, and capacity to know being only in and through material beings—while also making reference to St. Thérèse of Lisieux's approach to communion with God: la petite voie. *See "in via"*

judgment of existence/primal division of being (***Seinsurteil, Ur-Teil des Seins***) The intellect's "second operation" (after "concept formation") is "judgment," the act by which it composes or divides subjects and predicates, declaring *what is* or *what is not* the case. The German word for judgment (*das Urteil*) also means primal (*Ur-*) division (*teilen*); when hyphenated, the term is meant to indicate not only the intellect's act of division and composition, but also the correlative division between being and nonbeing. *See "simplex apprehensio"*

logicized spirit (***der logisierte Geist***) This phrase indicates one of the results of attempting to betray the "necessary sense of being," in which goodness gets identified with ideality. Behind this metaphysical temptation, which appropriates the function of the will to the intellect, is the theological heresy of failing to distinguish the Person of the Spirit properly from the Person of the Son, or Logos (which inevitably implies juxtaposing them to each other in another respect). "Logicized spirit" has its correlate in "pneumatic reason." These correlative temptations are characteristic of modern metaphysics generally, but they reach a culmination in a certain respect in Hegel's philosophy. The more properly theological correlates of the logicizing of the Spirit are the disobedience of the Son and the depotentiating of the Father. *See "pneumatic reason" and "depotentiating"*

luminous night (***Licht-Nacht***) A term meant to capture the simultaneous wealth and poverty of the intellect, as suggested in the Aristotelian interpretation of intellect as both active and passive. This simultaneity is the intellectual correlate, as it were, of being's convertibility with "nothing" or, in other words, of the paradox that characterizes created being: ***completum et simplex sed non subsistens.*** Just as these two dimensions are not separate or opposed, but both characterize being at once, so too does the light of the agent intellect coincide with the "darkness" of the intellect as "patient," that is, receptive, able to become in a certain sense all things. *See "intellectus agens and intellectus possibilis"*

metaphysics as reenactment (*die "Metaphysik in der Wiederholung"*) Kierkegaard introduced the category of "repetition" (in German, *Wiederholung*, that is, "retrieval," "recapitulation," or "reenactment") into philosophy as the Christian response to the Greek "recollection." Heidegger appropriated the term in the phrase *Metaphysik in der Wiederholung* in his early work to describe his own way of reading figures in the history of thought. Ulrich uses Heidegger's phrase to designate an approach to philosophy that engages a particular thinker's understanding by leading it back to its roots in being's "movement into subsistence," which is manifest in all human thought, whether in a proper or a perverted form. The point of this approach is to enter into a person's thinking, to reenact it from within, in order both to judge it and liberate it in relation to this ultimate ground. It is, so to speak, the philosophical analogical reenactment of substitutionary atonement.

motus Motion, or change, in the specific sense of a transition from potency to act.

movement into subsistence (*Subsistenzbewegung*) Creation is God's gift of being; this gift implies something like a "movement of being" from God to the finite creature—keeping in mind, of course, that this is not a motion or change (*motus*) in the usual sense, which presupposes an existing thing that undergoes alteration. Creation can be described as a "movement into subsistence" insofar as it designates that "to be," which is "what" God gives as his "first effect," nevertheless arrives at itself, so to speak, only in the substance that subsists. In other words, the act of creation does not terminate in esse or in essences; instead, it comes to completion only in things carrying out their own existence, their concrete openness to being. This "movement" thus occurs in obedience to the "necessary sense of being." *See "subsistence," "movement of finitization," and "necessary sense of being"*

movement of finitization (*Verendlichungsbewegung*) The "movement" of being in the act of creation, in which God gives esse (which he *is*) to creatures; it is not a motus because it does not effect a change from potency to act, but it is characterized analogously as a "movement" insofar as it implies a kind of "transition" from esse as infinite act to the finite substance, which alone subsists in the created order. This phrase is used more or less interchangeably with "movement into subsistence," though the latter places more emphasis on the result of the movement. *See "movement into subsistence"*

necessary sense of being (*der notwendige Seins-sinn*) *Sinn* means "meaning," but also "direction," "mode," or "tenor." Most fundamentally, the Indo-Germanic root word *sin* means "way": thus that which makes sense is a way that leads to an appropriate end. The phrase "necessary sense of being," accordingly, indicates the direction of being's "movement"; insofar as goodness has the *ratio finis*, the sense of being is designated by the ontological moment of bonicity. It is necessary in the sense of *Not-wendigkeit* (see the entry below), and because there is nothing more ultimate than goodness, thus understood, to which it would be subordinated. *See also "bonicity," "need-relieving/necessary"*

need-relieving/necessary (*das "Not-wendige"*) The sense of being is "necessary" both according to the Latin *ne-cessarium*,—that is, "inevitable"—and the German *notwendig*—that is, providing relief (*wendig*) of distress or need (*die Not*). Articulated as *not-wendig*, the term is used in HA to indicate both the inevitability of being's "movement into subsistence" and the distress of the contradiction that would result if being were hypostasized. This latter "need," however, is always already relieved by the necessary "movement" of being. *See "distress," "contradiction"*

ontological difference (*die ontologische Differenz*) A phrase made current by Heidegger, indicating the difference between being as expressed by the verbal infinitive (*das Sein* or *esse*: "to be") and being as expressed by the present participle (*das Seiende* or *ens*: "the being" or "entity"). The "ontological difference" is typically presented in English as the difference between "being and beings," or "being and entities," but the more literal translation would be "the difference between 'to be' and 'that which is.'" The phrase is occasionally hyphenated in *Homo Abyssus* as "onto-logical," in order to emphasize that this difference is simultaneously a matter of being (on) and reason (logos), insofar as human reason is required to co-enact the difference. Importantly, for Ulrich, the expression indicates, not in the first place a difference separating two "things," but above all an *event*, the enactment of an openness to being in things. Man enacts the ontological difference by receiving his being as a *gift*, which is simultaneous with his openness to the being of things and, ultimately, an openness to the Origin of all.

ontological moments (*die Seinsmomente*) The "ontological moments" are reality, ideality, and bonicity. Loosely, these are the "phases" of being's "movement into subsistence," but it is better to think of them as "aspects" of that "movement," since this latter is not a *motus* that occurs through sequential steps. While the "transcendentals" (e.g., res, verum, bonum, etc.) describe being simply, and so apply both to creation and, analogously, to God, the "ontological moments" refer to the "movement" that brings about, so to speak, the various created things that are one, good, true, and so forth. *See "reality," "ideality," and "bonicity"*

ontological spatiotemporality (*ontologische Raumzeitlichkeit*) The character of being insofar as it enables the existence of space and time at all; conversely, the interpretation of being that is given to us through the concrete experience of space and time, that is., how space and time reveal or give being to us. As the foundation of space and time, ontological spatiotemporality is constituted through the relation between the principles of being (esse and essence), and their relation, in turn, to the subsisting thing (ens). "Ontological spatiotemporality" may be lived properly in freedom, in which case one is truly present (hic et nunc) and experiences the present as a fruitful integration of the past and future, or it can be perverted in a variety of ways, in which case the present tends to be swallowed up into an absolutized past or absolutized future, and place is reduced to abstract space. *See "thing-of-the-past," "being present," "ad-vent," "cleared/spaced," and "generated/temporalized"*

onto-theo-logy (*die Onto-theo-logie*) A term coined by Kant but made current by Heidegger, who takes it to be constitutive of Western metaphysics. For the latter, it refers to the way of thinking that interprets beings in terms of an abstract concept of being, and at the same time interprets the notion of being in relation to an absolute entity, God. In Heidegger's judgment, metaphysics is constitutively ontotheological, which means that metaphysical thinking cannot help but think being in terms of God and God in terms of being. It thus never manages to think the *difference* between being and beings, and so reflect on the *meaning* of being simply "as such." The term has come to be used, more generally, to refer to the tendency to reduce God to the *summum ens*,—that is, nothing but an entity—though in the highest sense. For his part, Ulrich uses the term in HA to describe the bracketing together—that is, the false binding—of God and world into a single whole, through the medium of hypostasized being.

participation per compositionem A phrase coined by L.-B. Geiger to refer to participation by way of a composition between two elements that are distinct from each other; we have here a more "Aristotelian" approach to participation. According to this description, an entity participates in being by virtue of the composition between essence and esse, and the difference among entities occurs by virtue of the differentiation of composed substances; in HA, the phrase highlights the essence in its character as posited and thus sets into relief being's nonsubsistence. Nevertheless, insofar as the posited essence itself proceeds from esse, we ought to say that *participation per compositionem* is contained within *participation per similitudinem*. *See participation per similitudinem*

participation per similitudinem A phrase coined, like the previous one, by L.-B. Geiger, who uses it to refer to the similitude that exists between different degrees of perfection of one and the same "form." It is thus the more "Platonic" approach to participation. From this perspective, the difference among entities is due to the different modes of participation in a single form. In HA, the phrase corresponds to the essence specifically in its procession from esse, and sets into relief the fullness of being as completum et simplex. *See participation per compositionem*

pneumatic reason (*pneumatische Vernunft*) The form reason takes when it appropriates to itself the function of the will (which occurs when bonicity is absorbed into ideality). The corresponding theological heresy is the reduction of the Spirit to the Logos. *See logicized spirit*

posited or positing (*gesetzt* or *die Setzung*) It is generally the essence, or the *res* (or indeed the ontological moment connected with res, i.e., reality) that is characterized as "posited." This character indicates a number of things: the "real distinctness" of the essence from esse—that is, the fact that the essence cannot be exhaustively explained by its procession from esse, but has its roots—"beyond" created esse, in God's agency, and so as *posited* by the absolute; as really distinct, the essence is "presup-*posed*"—that is, anteriorly posited—in the gift of esse. To speak of the res as "posited" highlights its "givenness," which is in a sense absolute; the real thing, as the given unity of esse and essence, is always already just *there*, which is why the ontological moment of reality reveals something of the "uncaused" aspect of being (and, more profoundly, something of the unoriginateness of the Father) (see the entry on "uncaused character" below). Finally, the word designates the positivity, or nonreducibility, of the essence to anything else, by virtue of the essence's possession of unity, not through participation (like being and goodness), but *per seipsam*, "of itself." *See "positivity"*

positivity (*die Postitivität*) The absolute thereness, givenness, of entities, which are divided from nonbeing in so far as they are. If the essence may be described as "posited," it is because esse is "pure positivity." As such, "to be" is never set in opposition to the "nothing," which it would then have to overcome. For this reason, being does not have to derive any dialectical energy from negation, or from the "contradiction," but has its energy, so to speak, as the positivity of love. *See "posited" and "contradiction"*

possibilia In general, the intelligible natures of things considered apart from the question of whether they exist in reality; in Scotus, the possibilia are the modes of things that may be created and that are created, according to the sequence: possibilia-creabilia-creata.

potency-for-concrete-existence (*Daseinsmöglichkeit*) This phrase indicates the "nonessential" potency presented by matter, which is what enables physical things to exist concretely, that is, in space and time.

pseudo-subsistence (*pseudo-Subsistenz*) Esse creatum, as completum et simplex, is "nonsubsistent," but for a variety of reasons the human intellect may mentally substantialize or hypostasize it, treating it as if it were something existing in its own right, and so granting it "pseudo-subsistence." *See "hypostasization," "contradiction"*

quantitas dimensiva This is the first accidental disposition of matter as the primary subject of physical things and thus the medium through which all other accidents are related to their subject. "Dimensive" quantity indicates "extension in space" and is distinct from "mathematical" quantity, which is abstracted from space (Aristotle thus distinguishes between "mathematics" and "physics"). Speculatively considered, it represents being's having emptied itself in the most basic sense, spreading itself out into time and space and therefore accepting physical limitation.

ratio/intellectus (***Verstand/Vernunft***) For Hegel, "understanding" ("*Verstand*") designates the finiteness and "fixity" of the intellectual power; through our understanding, we define, and so separate, things from each other. "Reason" ("*Vernunft*"), by contrast, indicates for Hegel the "speculative" capacity of the intellect, its fluidity, its ability to see higher unities beyond the separation of things. For the scholastics, *intellectus* refers to the higher, intuitive aspect of the intellective power, while "ratio" refers to reason in its finite, discursive form: ratio is characteristic of *embodied* spirits, that is, of human knowing. It is sometimes said that German Idealism inverts the relative priority of reason and understanding. For his part, Ulrich connects the Hegelian *Vernunft* with the scholastic *intellectus* and *Verstand* with *ratio*, and rethinks the terms accordingly. *See "speculation"*

reality (***Realität***) The ontological moment indicating the always already given unity of essence and esse in the existing thing. It is distinct from "ideality," which correlates to *esse*, and "bonicity," which refers to the being in its actual subsistence (*ens*). *See "ontological moment," "ideality," "bonicity"*

reflection or reflexivity (***die Reflexion***) The activity of the intellect proper to the understanding or ratio, an activity that finds completion in conceptual definition. For Hegel, from whom Ulrich borrows the term "reflection," refers to thinking about thinking or, in other words, thought's abstraction from immediacy and so its apprehension of essence precisely in the essence's opposition to appearance. Reflection is thus constituted by opposition, and so is distinct from the speculative activity of reason, which sees beyond oppositions to their originating unity. *See "speculation"*

res "Thing"; the transcendental that expresses the existing entity specifically in relation to its essence.

"sameness" (**"*Selbigkeit*"**) Like Heidegger (cf. his lecture "Identity and Difference"), Ulrich distinguishes between abstract identity ("A = A") and concrete "sameness." The English word "same" is etymologically related to the German words *zusammen* ("together"), and *sammeln* ("to gather"). It is important to recall the etymological root in order to avoid reading the word here as indicating something like identity or mere equivalence, which excludes any difference or otherness. Instead, in this philosophical context, the word means a profoundly intimate belonging together (the German term *das Selbe* has a reference to the *self*, or *das Selbst*; the word is used to translate the Greek τὸ *αὐτό*, and the Latin *ipsum* the "very self"), a perfect unity that nevertheless does not eliminate the difference between the two things thus united. *See "abstract identity"*

self-necessitation (***sich-vernötigen***) A thing's innate drive to reach its proper way or form of being; it is ultimately goodness or perfection—the "necessary sense of being"—that informs this drive. *See "necessary sense of being"*

simplex apprehensio According to scholastic Aristotelianism, the first act of the intellect by which it apprehends the intelligible species of a thing, also known as "concept formation." This act is followed by judgment, by which a proposition is formed, and reasoning, by which some propositions are derived from others. *See "judgment of existence/primal division of being"*

speculation (die Spekulation) In traditional thought, "speculative" thinking referred to knowing God through creation, as in a mirror (Latin = *speculum*). For Kant, speculation was reason's mistaken effort to achieve knowledge of the transcendent, that which lies beyond experience. For Hegel, speculation is the activity proper to reason (in contrast to the reflection of understanding), which reaches beyond the immediately apparent, or beyond the dichotomies of the understanding, to their life-giving unity. For Ulrich, following Hegel, speculation is reason's aspiration to the "innermost heart" of things, and its reductio of all things to that heart, which is in one respect being ultimately in its goodness, and in another respect God. *See "reflection or reflexivity"*

sublation (*Aufhebung*) Friedrich Schiller originally introduced the term in the technical philosophical sense, but it was made famous by Hegel as a distinctive part of his philosophy. The German word *Aufhebung* has three distinct meanings: to "take out" (i.e., to eliminate), to "take away or into safe keeping" (i.e., to preserve), and to "take up" (i.e., to elevate and transform). In HA, Ulrich takes over Hegel's term, with its threefold sense, but removes from it any shadow of dialectic or the violence of negativity. Thus when Ulrich says that the ontological difference is "sublated" in God, he does not mean that the ontological difference is a negation of God's perfection, which God then overcomes (the infinite as the negation of the negation that is implied by finitude). Instead, the ontological difference is in one sense closed in God, since there is nothing incomplete in him, but it is closed in such a way that it is at the same time revealed in its perfection as difference. God is not the opposite of creation, but the absolutely generous giver of being, which means that being itself is a likeness of absolute generosity.

subsistence (Subsistenz) From the Latin *subsistentia*, which means "a standing under." The word refers to the per se existence of a substance, the mode of being by which a thing comes to completion in itself. It refers to the substance in its concreteness and individuality, the actual exercise of its existence. The word has become associated with hypostasis (or supposit) and person. In his article "Ethos als ontologische Struktur der Mitmenschlichkeit," Ulrich cites a passage from Aquinas to explicate the meaning of "*living* subsistence": "the return to one's own essence is called the very subsistence of a thing in itself … subsistent forms reach out to other things, perfecting them and influencing them—in such a way, however, that they still retain their immanence and self-possession" (*De ver.*, 2.2.2). The human soul, as personal and as subsistent form, thus provides a model of what subsistence means more generally, precisely in its properly human acts of intellect and will, that is, in its word and love as freedom. In subsistence, a thing is simultaneously most concretely itself and most open to the mystery of being. This is why there is a particular connection between subsistence, bonicity, and the "necessary sense of being." *See "movement into subsistence," "bonicity," and "necessary sense of being"*

substantiell Pertaining specifically to the order of substance.

superessentiality (*die Überwesenhaftigkeit*) The transcendence of esse with respect to essence, insofar as esse is "the actuality of all acts." The superessentiality of being is a reflection, we might say, of its radically generous character, its not holding onto itself (which would make it an essence, or hypostasize it). In a certain respect, the intellect is also superessential, in the sense that it is able to receive within itself all other forms. There is a certain analogy between the superessentiality of being, the supernaturality of grace, and the distinction between person and nature or essence in Christ and the Trinity on the one hand, and in the human being on the other.

temptation (*die Versuchung*) There is a connection between the word "temptation" (*Versuchung*) and "attempt" (*Versuch*). Metaphysical "temptations" occur only because man has been given a task that he must make an effort, an attempt, to achieve. Because being is not simply an "other" to reason, as an object in itself over against the soul, the necessary sense of being requires man's proper participation. The failure to follow this necessary sense is not simply an intellectual mistake, but always involves in some respect both the intellect and will at once. *Versuchung* can also be translated as "trial," as a "being put to the test." In this respect, the necessary sense of being represents a *Versuchung* for man. Understood in the way described, possible misreadings of being and the nature of things may be described as "temptations." But because temptations are failures in the task of being, elucidations of the grounds of the failure become a particularly illuminating way of explicating the proper meaning of being.

theologoumenon A dimension of things, or a meaning of things, that has come to light specifically as a result of God's self-revelation in history.

thing-of-the-past (*das Ge-wesen*) *See "essential past"*

totum potestativum In *ST* 1.77.1.1, Aquinas characterizes the human soul as a "potential whole," which he distinguishes from a "universal whole" and an "integral whole": a "universal whole" is present in each of its parts according to its entire essence and power; an "integral whole" is present in its parts, but not according to its entire essence or its power; and a "potential whole" (totum potestativum) is present in its parts according to its entire essence but not its entire power. The point is to distinguish between the soul in its (first) actuality as form of the living body, and the second actuality (i.e., the soul's exercise of its proper operations, namely, knowing and loving), to which the soul is in potentia. In HA, Ulrich connects this distinction with the theme of the soul's native convenientia with all things, or, in other words, he identifies the *totum potestativum* with the soul's being "in a certain sense all things," as Aristotle and Aquinas put it. The phrase *totum potestativum* is thus used to indicate the paradox of the intellect's "luminous night," man's status as the "focal point" of the "movement into subsistence" and "normative pattern" of the cosmos, and his gift/task to enable all things to be what they are. *See "luminous night," "anthropological reduction," and "guiding pattern"*

transnihilation (*Durchnichtung*) The "crossing out" of the hypostasis of being, and so being's "crossing through" to finitude and subsistence by way of the essence.

uncaused character (*Nichtverursachtsein*) Because being is "understood prior to causality," it does not fit simply within the causal horizon, as it were. Even created things, because they participate in being (and because being is not only "nonsubsistent," but *completum et simplex*), reflect something of the "uncaused character" that belongs to being as such, though it remains the case that this character is something they *receive*. In other words, it is paradoxically as *created* by God that things reflect an "uncaused" character. There is a connection between the affirmation of God as "more" than just cause (or else God would be reduced to his function in relation to creation, and so would be dependent on creation to be what he is) and the recognition of creatures as more than just effects; conversely, to deny the "uncaused" character of things absolutely would imply a depotentiating of God, who is thus unable genuinely to give being (which is "understood prior to all causality"). The "uncaused character" comes to expression in a particular way in the posited character of the res, which is always already a unity of essence and esse. *See "res"*

vacillation of being (or ontological vacillation) (*Seinsschwebe*) When being is mentally fixed in its explicitness—that is, its distinction from the things that are, and is thus hypostasized as a sort of thing in itself set over against essences—it may be said to be held "in suspense" (*in der Schwebe*). Another way to characterize the same phenomenon is to say that being, in this case, "clings to itself," resisting finitization or the "movement into subsistence," and thus rejecting the "crisis" that is proper to it; it is no longer resolute and decisive but "vacillates," expresses the "Yes and No at once," and so falls into contradiction. The "ontological vacillation" is equivalent to the absorption of being in ideality. *See "ideal vacillation," "clinging-to-itself," "movement into subsistence," "movement of finitization," "contradiction," "crisis of being," "ideality"*

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Author's note: Several texts are listed in the bibliography below that fructified my thinking through the resistance they offered my engagement with them. I also wish to take this opportunity to express heartfelt gratitude for those works that enriched my thinking but are left unnamed here. Texts that appeared after 1958 were not consulted. Dialogues with a number of authors—L.-B. Geiger, J. B. Lotz, A. Forest, C. Fabro, J. de Finance, van Steenbergen, de Raeymaeker, L. Lavelle, and others—that I undertook in the original version of this book (the 1958 habilitation thesis) have been left out or only partially included. This decision was made in order to bring the book's line of argument more directly to expression. Nevertheless, the encounter with these thinkers also left its impression on the present version of the book.

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